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WILLIAM TELL;

OR,

SWITZERLAND DELIVERED.

BY THE

CHEVALIER DE FLORIAN,
Member of the Royal Academies of Paris, Madrid, Florence, &c.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF TELL.

"Go to the land where TELL drew freedom's bow;
And in the patriot's country thou shalt find
A semblance 'twixt the scene and his immortal mind."

CAMPBELL.

London:

JAMES WATSON, 18, COMMERCIAL PLACE,
CITY ROAD, FINSBURY.

1836.

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A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

CELEBRATED SWISS PATRIOT,

WILLIAM TELL.

Few names are more familiar to us than that of William Tell. None, that more deserve to be held in respect and remembrance. As long as the love of freedom inspires the human breast, so long will the name of Tell, with those of Wallace, Hambden, and others, be held in reverence.

William Tell was born at Burglen in the canton of Uri. He appears to have been the son of a labouring peasant, and to have followed the same occupation.

Switzerland was at this period (1300) under the government of Albert, emperor of Austria; who superintended their affairs by deputy. Albert was one of those royal monsters so common at that period; one, who looked upon the labouring people as naturally inferior to himself, whose lives were only permitted them, to produce necessaries and luxuries for his enjoyment, and those who upheld his tyranny. Albert appointed as governor of Switzerland, a man, equal to himself in all the vices that degrade humanity.

The name of this governor was Gesler. Not satisfied with the power exercised by his predecessors, he studied by every means to increase the exactions, and to insult and oppress at the same time, the unfortunate people, who were subject to his tyranny.

The appearance of comfort among the people was an excuse for the levying of an impost; and the amount of that impost was regulated by the caprice of the tyrant, and the wants of his slavish myrmidons.

Life, and the proceeds of industry had no protection from the miscreant Gesler—who misgoverned Switzerland; both were at his mercy.

To resist such robbery, was to subject the person resisting, to torture as well as robbery. To check the tyrant, to vindicate the sacred rights of humanity, and to free their country, was the

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glorious aim of Tell and his companions. To suffer death in the endeavour to overthrow such oppression, they considered preferable to a base submission to the tyranny of a wretch like Gesler.

Tell and his companions waited for an opportunity to revenge themselves on their oppressors. The multiplied crimes of the cruel Gesler, soon afforded them such a trial. The cries of the injured, and the general hatred, forced the oppressed into a compact for their deliverance. The particulars are thus stated in "Switzerland Illustrated," by Dr. Beattie:—"After Gesler's appointment the tolls were raised, the most venial offences punished with imprisonment and forfeiture, and the inhabitants treated with every mark of contempt. Happening one day to ride past a newly-built house belonging to Stauffacher, in the village of Stenin,—"What!" exclaimed Gesler, "shall it be endured that these grovelling peasants should erect such an edifice as this? If boors are to be so lodged—*quid facient magistri?*"

This picture of Austrian government in Switzerland, in the fourteenth century, does not materially differ from Austrian government in Germany and Italy at the present day. If more deference be now paid to external appearance, the same rooted hatred to liberty is still shown by the Austrian despot. Look to the victims of freedom pining in the dungeons of those countries.

Tell and his friends took measures for their country's redress. "The rendezvous selected for the meeting of the patriots, was a lonely sequestered strip of meadow, in the angle of the lake, called Grutli, surrounded by thickets, at the foot of the Brunnen. They met again in this place, when each of them, in proof of the desire felt for the redress of their wrongs, presented ten confederates each. With uplifted hands, and eyes fixed upon the starry firmament, under whose friendly canopy their meetings had been matured into action, they bound themselves by an express vow, to redress their country's injuries; to have *no interest at heart but the common welfare;* to endure no wrongs, to commit no trespass."

Gesler in the wantonness of his power, set his hat on a pole in the market-place of Altorff, and compelled all the inhabitants to pay the same homage to it as to his own person.

"William Tell the cross-bowman of Burglen, and one of the heroes of Grutli, passed the symbol of tyranny without paying it the proper honours, he was instanly arrested and brought before Gesler.—"Wherefore," asked Gesler, "hast thou dis-

obeyed my orders, failed in thy respect to the king of the Romans? Why pass the sacred badge of thy sovereign without homage?" 'Verily,' said Tell, 'it was an accident.'—Gesler knowing that Tell was an excellent marksman, and had a family of fine children, he ordered these children to be confronted with their father. "To which of these children," inquired Gesler, "art thou most attached?" "I make no distinctions," said Tell; "they are all equally dear to me." "It is my order," said Gesler, "that with an arrow thou split an apple placed on the head of one of thy children; and in the event of thy missing the apple, or killing the child, thy own life shall be forfeited."

The child was placed under the linden tree which shaded the market-place; the ferocious Gesler placed the apple with his own hand upon the child's head—a boy six years old. Tell took up his bow, and adjusting with seeming apathy the shaft to the string, drew boldly—then staggered back like a man struck with sudden blindness, as if his very spirit had passed away with the arrow—a shout of triumph recalled his senses,—he saw the cloven apple— and embraced his child.

Gesler—the brutal Gesler alone stood unmoved He perceived in the girdle of Tell, an arrow half concealed. "For what purpose," inquired Gesler, "hast thou reserved that arrow which I see. Speak frankly, and thy life is spared—dissemble and thou shalt die." "So be it," answered Tell, "the arrow which thou seest, was intended, had I slain my child with the first, to avenge his death by——" "How!" exclaimed the baliff; "avenge?" "Yes," calmly continued Tell, "to avenge his death by sacrificing thine! and thou perceivest that my shaft is not one to miscarry.—This much in obedience to thy command!"

Tell did not regain his liberty, but was forced away by order of the tyrant to the dungeon of Kusnacht. Gesler accompanied the soldiers with their prisoner in his own barge across the lake of Lucerne, in order to avoid the possibility of a rescue. One of those sudden storms, so common in that country, arose during the passage. Tell, whose skill as a navigator was not inferior to his other qualifications, was released from his chains, and placed at the helm. He steered the barge to the point of a rock, still shown to travellers, on which he sprung from the barge, and made his way to the mountains, to the terror and dismay of Gesler and his satellites.

Tell watched the return of Gesler to Altorff; and, by the discharge of an arrow from his bow, shot the tyrant to the heart.

The destruction of Gesler led to a general rising of the people. The signal of resistance passed from height to height, and the beacon of liberty blazed in triumph along the Alps.

This great event in Swiss history took place in the year 1308. It is worthy of remark that this resistance to despotic power, was the glorious effort of men without riches; without titles. The patrimony of these patriots, was their virtuous industry; they cultivated the earth, they rendered it fruitful; and, they were determined to enjoy its produce, or perish in resisting the robbers to whom they had long been subject.

The union of a small number of men, animated by the spirit of liberty, communicated that spirit to their countrymen which has been perpetuated, strengthened, and approved by their descendants. "Thus, O shade of Gesler,"—they exclaim, "that same ducal hat by which in cruel mockery thou didst insult an oppressed people, has become the signal and badge of Helvetic freedom."

The founder of Swiss liberty, William Tell; was drowned in a mountain cataract in the year 1354. The place of his residence in Altorff, and the spot where he slew Gesler, have chapels erected on them, where religious rites are performed on every succeeding anniversary of Switzerland's Independence.

We will close this short account of Tell, with the following extract, the spirit of which will meet a response in the breast of all who love liberty.—"How long" said the wife of Werner Stauffacher,* one day, in a startling appeal to his feelings—"How long shall arrogance triumph, and humility weep? How long shall the insolent stranger possess our lands, and bestow our inheritance on his heirs? What avails it that our mountains and valleys are inhabited by men, if, their swords that ought to be drawn in their country's service—are only worn for show? How long shall the Helvetian mother weep over her unhappy offspring, and feel herself at once the wife and the nurse of slaves? How long must our sons bear the insulting yoke, and our daughters be exposed to insult and shame, while we, by our silence, give countenance to the oppressor? Are our chains so firmly rivetted as not to be wrenched asunder by patriotic hands? No! for although women and babes—as the helpless witnesses of their country's degradation, can only weep and pray, *men*, Stauffacher—*men should do more!*"

* Stauffacher was an associate of Tell in the struggle for Swiss liberty.

WILLIAM TELL;

OR

SWITZERLAND DELIVERED.

BOOK FIRST.

FRIENDS of Liberty! magnanimous Hearts! souls of Sensibility! ye, who know how to die for your independence, and live only for your brethren, lend an ear to my accents. Come! hear how one single man, born in an uncivilised clime, in the midst of a people curbed beneath the rods of an oppressor, by his individual courage raised this people, so abased, and gave it a new being; instructed it in its rights—Rights, sacred and inalienable—which Nature had unfolded, but which Ignorance and Despotism had so long concealed.

This man, the Child of Nature, proclaimed the laws of his Mother—armed himself to maintain them—awoke his compatriots slumbering beneath the weight of their galling chains—put into their hands the ploughshare, changed by him into the Sword of Heroes—vanquished and dispersed the cohorts which the tyrants opposed to him—and in a barbarous age, amidst rocks and mountains deemed almost uninhabitable, founded a retreat for those two Daughters of Heaven and comforters of the earth—Reason and Virtue.

I invoke not thee to-day, O Poesy divine! thou, whom I have adored from earliest infancy; thou, whose brilliant fictions formed my chief felicity; preserve thy magic pencil for the Heroes whose portraits need embellishment. Thy ornaments would but disparage him whom now I wish to celebrate; thy garlands would but ill become his countenance intrepid; his look, serene yet terrible, would soften too much under thy hands. Fear to touch his wild and native pomp; leave him his rustic garb—leave him his bow of yew—let him wander alone across the rocks, and on the margin of the blue torrent: follow him from afar, with reverence and with fear; and, with

a timid trembling hand, scatter in the paths that he has trodden the flowers wild of Eglantine.

In the centre of ancient Helvetia, in that country so renowned for the valour of its inhabitants, three Cantons, whose narrow limits are closed on every side by rocks and mountains almost inaccessible, had preserved those simple manners which the Creator of the world gave at first to man, as his best protection against vice,—labour, frugality, good faith, simplicity, and all the virtues pursued by conquerors, the Kings of the earth, concealed themselves behind these mountains. They were long unknown, nor yet complained of their happy obscurity. *Liberty* at length seated herself on the summit of their rocks; and from that fortunate hour, the true Sage, the true Hero, never pronounces but with respect and reverence, the names of *Uri*, *Schweitz*, and *Underwald*.

The inhabitants of these three Cantons, perpetually occupied with rural labours, escaped for several ages those crimes, those miseries, produced by ambition, by the quarrels, by the guilty frenzy of those numerous barbarian chiefs, who on the ruins of the Roman empire founded a multitude of states, usurped the rights of man, governed by a code of horror, reduced by ignorance in favour of tyranny and superstition. Forgotten, contemned perhaps, by these despoilers of the world, the labourers, the herdsmen of *Uri*, partially submitted to those new Cæsars, and yet bore the consoling name of being free: they preserved their ancient laws, their customs, and their simple manners. Tranquil, sovereign masters in their peaceful cottages, the fathers of families grew old in peace, surrounded by respect and love: their children, ignorant of evil, fearing God, obeying their father, knew no other happiness, no other desire, no other hope, than that of resembling the good man from whom they received their being; to obey and to imitate him, formed the circle of their life. This people, simple and virtuous, almost forgotten or unknown to the world, remained alone with Nature, protected by their poverty, continued to be good, and were as yet unpunished.

Not far from *Altorff*, their capital, on the margin of the lake which gives its name to the town, a mountain rears its lofty head, from whence the traveller, fatigued with the long and painful journey, surveys a multitude of valleys, unequally bordered by rocks and hills. Gentle streams, rapid torrents, now falling in cascades and bounding o'er the rocks, now meandering beneath a bed of moss, descending slow, or urging precipitate their way, at length reach the vallies, mingle and

unite their streams, water the extensive pastures covered with flocks and herds immense; then lose themselves in the limpid lake, in which the Bull delights to lave.

On the summit of this mountain stood a poor cottage in the centre of a small field, a vineyard, and an orchard. A labourer, a Hero, who as yet knew not himself, and whose heart only confessed the love of his country, *William Tell*, scarcely twenty years of age, received from his father this inheritance. "My son," said the old man on the bed of death, "I have laboured, I have lived. Sixty winters have shed their snows upon this peaceful cottage, without vice ever having dared to cross the threshold of my door, without ever having one night's rest broken by remorse. Labour like me, my son; like me chuse a virtuous wife, whose love, confidence, soft and patient friendship, will double all thy innocent pleasures, and share each grief and pain. Marry then, my dear William: a virtuous man unmarried is but half virtuous.—Farewell! moderate thy grief. Death is easy for the good man. When I sent thee to carry fruits to our brethren, the bread which they wanted, didst thou not feel pleasure in rendering me an account of the good actions with which I had charged thee? Even so, my boy, I am going to render an account to *my* Heavenly Father of the good actions with which he charged me so long ago: He will receive me, my son, as I received thee; and near him shall I expect thee. Do good on the spot where I leave thee; be good as thou art free: but if ever a tyrant dares to infringe in the least on our ancient liberty, William, die for thy country, and thou shalt find how sweet thy death will be."

Deep sunk his words into the feeling soul of Tell. After having rendered the last duties to his venerable sire, after having dug his grave at the foot of a willow near his cottage, he swore to himself (and never did he violate the oath) to go alone every evening to the sacred tomb of his father, to recall every action, every thought of the preceding day, and demand of his father's shade, if he were contented with his son.

O! how many virtues did he owe to this pious obligation!—how much the fear of blushing in interrogating the paternal shade, accustomed his soul of fire to vanquish and subdue his passions!—Master of his most ardent desires—turning even their violence to the profit of wisdom, Tell, heir of his father's little all, imposed on himself labours yet more hard; obtained from the earth a double harvest of which the poor partook. He arose with the dawn of day, and, sustaining with a vigorous arm the extremity of a plough which two oxen drew with

difficulty, he buried the shining iron in a flinty soil, hastened the sluggish animals with the goad, and, his brow covered with sweat, only sought repose at the close of day to mourn the fate of those unfortunate neighbours, who were not possessed of a plough. This idea occupied his mind, as he led his oxen home, nor did it leave him during the hours of rest; and often in the morning, with the first peep of Aurora's beams, *Tell* went and laboured in the fields of his indigent friends, sowed them with grain during their absence, and concealed it from them; not to deprive them of the pleasure of grateful thanks, but to spare himself that gratitude arising from his beneficence towards his equals:—these were his cares, these his relaxations, these his pleasures. To labour and to do good, formed both his occupation and repose.

Nature, in endowing William with a soul so pure, accompanied her gift with muscular strength and extreme activity:—he was taller by the head than the tallest of his companions; he scoured the rocks alone; braved the dashing torrent; darted across the frozen craggs; and took the chamois in its flight. By strength of arm he pulled down the mountain oak on which the axe had made but slight impression, and on his shoulders bore it entire with its immense branches. On the holidays, in the midst of the games celebrated by the young archers, *Tell*, who had no equal at the bow, was compelled to remain an idle spectator, in order that the prizes might be contended for: he was placed, notwithstanding his youth, amongst the old men seated to award: there, trembling with the honour, motionless and scarcely breathing, his eyes followed the rapid arrow; applauded with transport the archer who was nearest to the mark; and his arms, perpetually extended, seemed anxious to embrace a rival worthy of himself; but when their quivers were exhausted, and the mountain dove as yet remained untouched; when the bird, tired with fluttering, reposed on the summit of the pole, and regarded with a tranquil eye the efforts of her powerless enemies, William alone arose—William took his bow of yew; gathered three arrows from the ground. With the first he struck the pole, and made the pigeon flutter; with the second he cut the string which retained her painful flight; the third sought her in the air, and brought her breathless at the feet of the astonished Judges.

Without priding himself on so many advantages, preferring, to the most brilliant success, the most obscure of good actions, *Tell* reproached himself with his tardiness in obeying the commands of his father. *Tell* determined to marry, and young

Emma attracted his affections. Emma was the most chaste, the most beautiful of all the daughters of *Uri*:—The zephyr sporting on the rose leaf,—the source filtering through the rock, each brilliant drop of which reflected the first rays of light, was less pure than the heart of Emma. Peace, softness, reason, had chosen her soul for their sanctuary: her virtue, though she was a stranger even to the name, was to her existence; nor could she comprehend how one could cease to be good, without ceasing to be.

An orphan, and without fortune, educated from her infancy in the cottage of an old man, the only surviving relation of her indigent family, Emma kept his flocks. Ere Aurora illumined the tops of the sombre willow, Emma was on the mountains, surrounded by her sheep, and spinning a dress for her benefactor: she returned with the shades of evening, arranged the cottage, prepared the repast of the night and that of the morrow, and spared the feeble old man the necessity of wanting any thing whilst she was absent: she then surrendered herself to rest, satisfied with the preceding day; happy in having acquitted herself of the sweet claims of gratitude, and confident that the morrow would yield her an equal pleasure.

Tell knew her; he loved her. *Tell* did not employ those attentive cares, that complaisance, that art, a stranger to his soul, which so often profanes love by combining it with finesse; which knows how to precipitate or retard the confession of a tender sentiment. A stranger to this study; ignorant that the gift of pleasing could exist distinct from the pleasure of loving; *Tell* never sought occasion to see Emma more often: he did not follow her to the mountains; he did not wait with anxiety for her return in the evening; on the contrary, during her absence he went to visit her aged benefactor. There, in long conversations, in which freedom, truth, and the unrestrained emotions of the soul, presided, William listened to the old man, who delighted to speak of Emma; related the most trifling of her actions—repeated all her expressions—recounted, with tears in his eyes, her patience, that inexhaustible goodness which rendered this orphan every day more dear to him. These praises, which sunk to the bottom of the soul of *Tell*, augmented his affection far more than the sight of his beloved: she arrived during those recitals; and *Tell* read on her brow of meekness, in her soft and tranquil smile, in her artless, modest mien, all that he had heard. He scarcely dared in trembling accents address a few words to her; soon left her with downcast eyes; saluted her with respect; and retired

with tardy step to his solitary rest, there to surrender himself to the endearing thoughts of Emma, more than he could in her presence.

At length, after six months were passed away, William felt confident that his love was at least a virtue: he resolved to tell her that he loved her, but, alas! he was unable to do this when alone; therefore, taking an opportunity when they were returning from public worship, and surrounded by the people, he whispered Emma—"I love thee much; I honour thee still more. I was good; you have made me sensible. If thou thinkest that thou canst be happy with me, receive my heart and hand. Come, dwell in my cottage; and on the grave of my beloved father will I teach thee those virtues he taught me." Emma hung down her head, and for the first time she felt the rising blush; presently she recovered the tranquil purity of her countenance, and, confident that she was bound in duty to express her feelings, "William," replied she, "I am much flattered by thy choice. Ever happy in my peaceful station, I feel it will be augmented by having the privilege of declaring in return, that thou also art the object of my affection." She gave him her hand:—*Tell* pressed it between his own. They gazed upon each other with silent and mutual looks of love, and in the eloquence of the eyes vowed eternal fealty to each other.

This union fixed the abode of happiness in the cottage of *Tell*. Labour was now sweeter, because Emma culled the fruits; every good action became doubly interesting, because Emma shared it.—Seldom asunder, they only parted for a few hours, to meet again with increase of rapture: their pleasures were tranquil, their love without the violence of momentary passion which ere long dwindles into disgust or hatred; they moderated their transports by pleasures more durable, by friendship, by confidence, by mutual esteem, and the fear which true affection always dreads of being unable to render each worthy of the other. These efforts rendered their souls more virtuous, more refined; meliorated every image of the mind, and caused a sweet exchange of thought and sentiment.

A son crowned their wishes and their hopes, was the pledge of mutual felicity, and formed a source of pleasure and happiness to which they were before strangers. The sweetly smiling babe, to whom they gave the name of Albert, was nursed in the lap of a fond mother till he reached his sixth year, when his father took charge of him himself: he led him to the fields; shewed him the meadows and the waving corn; then explained to him their utility; shewed him the mountains, the forests

and the rivers; then, bidding him look upwards, taught him to pronounce with awful reverence the sublime name of *the Almighty!* He told him that this God was present every where; that he was the witness and the judge of every thought and every action; that he only desired men to be good to make them eternally happy. Every morning and every evening he repeated these precepts: he explained by his own example what it was to be good; and, without regard to his infancy, and the weakness of his frame, he led him through the snows and over the fields of ice; exercised his young arms in lifting the yokes of the oxen; taught him to approach these formidable animals without fear, to hold the plough, and guide it.

Inured to toils while in the field, the tenderness of his years was forgotten, and he was no longer timid and effeminate unless when he returned home: then he ran to the arms of a fond delighted mother, embraced her, and with filial affection consulted her countenance that he might anticipate every wish of her bosom; and ere it could be expressed he hastened to perform it. O how often has this dear boy by his little affectionate attentions rendered his good mother supremely blest! how often in the absence of *Tell*, whose austere countenance supressed in the bosom of Emma the fondness of maternal love, did she press her lovely boy to her heart! "My dear Albert," she repeated in the ecstacy of maternal love, "my boy! my only boy! *my* life is linked with thine: 'tis in thy soul, my sweet infant, that mine exists. Know it, recollect it always, my child, my dear child; but before thy father feign to be ignorant how much I love thee."

Tell joined to so many sources of pleasure another equally important in prosperity or adversity—*Tell* possessed a friend: this friend, nearly of his own age, dwelt among the rocks which separate URI from UNDERWALD. The similarity of their souls, and not their persons, had united them in the bonds of friendship from the earliest period of their youth. *Melctal*, brave, virtuous, and generous, the counterpart of *Tell*; his soul glowed with enthusiasm in the cause of liberty and virtue: this enthusiasm was not capable of deep reflection, but concentrated in a focus, glowed with ardour, and burst forth with impetuosity. He was equal to the greatest actions; but, then, they were momentary: he was incapable of digesting a design of magnitude, unless it could be carried into immediate execution. *Melctal*, passionate and resolute, was unable to conceal his sentiments; but the moment his bosom framed them, his lips gave them utterance, and the transport of passion was over.

Tell, on the contrary, was of a disposition silent and reserved: he repressed his sentiments; cherished them in his bosom; reviewed, corrected, digested, and matured them, without permitting either his countenance or his tongue to be the index of what was passing in his soul. Each abhorred injustice; but the one burst forth like the rolling thunder, and braved every danger to punish it; while the other, silent and calm, waited for the moment when he might command success. *Melctal* was the mighty torrent which overthrew every obstacle in its way, until its force was spent. *Tell* was the rivulet which meandered almost unseen through the meadow, until the gradual influx of other streams swelled it into a powerful river: he resembled the accumulated snows of many winters, which, the solar heat, having detached from the craggy cliffs, sweeps all before it in its progress to the plain.

Melctal and *Tell* often crossed the short distance at which they lived from each other, to pass together those days which were devoted to repose and quiet: they enjoyed them alternately at each other's cottage, and looked forward to the next meeting with pleasure. Sometimes the virtuous Emma, with her husband and her son, carried to *Melctal* milk and the first fruits of their vineyard and orchard. Sometimes *Melctal* went, his aged sire leaning on his arm, and in his hand his daughter, the only pledge which remained of an affectionate wife, whose loss he still bewailed. *Tell* waited their arrival at the door: a bench was ready for the old man, and Emma presented him with a cup of wine; whilst the young Albert, whose anxious eyes beheld them from afar, prepared a nosegay for the little Clara, *Melctal's* lovely daughter. Oh! how pure and sweet were the pleasures they tasted together! what delights they felt around the rustic table! As soon as their frugal repast was finished, old *Melctal*, in spite of the burden of eighty years, without any other support than his stick, gained the loftiest summit of the mountain: there, seating himself in the midst of his friends and children, he uncovered his venerable head, to receive on his hoary locks the cheering warmth of the solar beam; and, when his satisfied eyes had delighted themselves with this view of Nature, this spectacle which enchanted him, which transported him in as lively a manner as in the bloom of youth, he then began to talk of his former years, his pains, his pleasures, the miseries attached to human life, the consolations which we always find in our conscience and in virtue. *Tell*, *Melctal*, *Emma*, listened with attentive respect. Clara and Albert seated near the old man, now looked at him with affec-

tion, and now pressed his hand. A single glance from William's eye brought the blush of innocence into their cheeks, and the old man, perceiving it, made excuses for them to William.

Clara and Albert grew together, and their innocent loves followed the progress of their years: already the happy days they passed together came too seldom for their wishes. Albert, during the long weeks which rolled away without seeing his Clara, sought and invented pretexts to leave his father's cottage, and fly to that of Clara: sometimes he came to tell *Melctal* that a bear had appeared on the mountain, and that the flocks were threatened; then he would go and inform him, that during the preceeding evening the north wind had blighted the young buds of the vines. *Melctal* listened to him with a smile; thanked him for his cares and his attentive friendship. Clara hastened to present him a bowl of milk: Albert, in seizing the bowl, clasped in his hands those of Clara, carried them with it to his lips, till the refreshing liquid was exhausted. Albert drank it slowly, with his eyes fixed on her he loved; and, satisfied with her smile, happy in the success of his expedients, he returned home to ponder on a new scheme for paying another visit.

Thus lived these two families; thus lived a people of brethren, for they formed but one family: nor age nor youth, nor wives nor husbands, knew a source of happiness or pleasure beyond the purity of friendship, innocence, love, labour, and equality. Alas! on a sudden the death of Rodolpho tore from them all that was dear, for it tore from them all these blessings. Rodolpho, raised by fortune to the throne of the Cæsars, had always respected the liberty of the Swiss: his successor, the haughty Albert, exhibited the reverse of all Rodolpho's virtues. Proud of his vain titles, his immense dominions, which seemed to stretch over half the world, he was indignant that a few shepherds, goatherds, labourers in the vineyards, should be exempted from the name of subjects. With gold he thought to purchase their liberty, vainly imagining that the execrable ore would render him master of those who had never bowed the knee or cringed at the feet of a tyrant. He looked around among the fawning sycophants whose crimes render them by turns the dread and hope of tyrants: he selected from among them one to conquer,— *Gesler*, the ruffian of the human race, and therefore the chosen favourite of the young emperor.

Gesler, followed by the myrmidons of tyranny, nay the refuse of these myrmidons, established his throne of blood in the heart of ALTORFF; ever brooding over mischief, more impetuous to

commit crimes than the miser eager to increase his hoard, waded in the blood of a free people. More diabolical than the arch fiend himself, *Gesler* racked his brain to invent some new, some more horrid, engine of torture, which might prolong the already agonized spark of life to the latest moment. Trembling at the name of Liberty, and dreading every hour the reward of his atrocities, he swore to extinguish even the *name* of freedom. He suffered his soldiers to commit every brutality, every crime, that the heart inured to vice, to rapine, and to plunder, from earliest infancy could conceive, or the mind led on by the blackest impulses could execute; and, setting the example himself, let loose his most hellish rage in the commission of every barbarity. The people complained in vain; their cries were only heard, that a pretext might be afforded for punishing them. Virtue and Liberty shuddered at the sight; they fled from the face of day, and concealed themselves in the peaceful cottages, where a daughter ruined, implored a mother's prayers to avenge her wrongs, a mother's tears to soothe her aching breast; the labourer cursed the soil which yielded its produce only for tyranny and oppression. The aged parents of virtuous children implored heaven that they might not survive the loss of all that was dear; they looked forward to death as to the first of blessings, the deliverer from the chains of tyranny. The air resounded with the shouts of monsters and the groans of those who perished; the sun hid his face; and a dark funereal cloud spread itself on the horizon of misery.

From the moment that these mischiefs began, *Tell* conceived the project of redressing them. Without even acquainting *Melctal* of his designs, or hinting it to his family, his mind, always superior to misfortune, walked in the thunder storm, and beheld the general wreck without dismay: he prepared himself not to suffer, but to deliver his country. Crimes heaped on crimes, the demons yelled more horribly, and these Cantons fell with terror at the feet of *Gesler*. Yet William trembled not, for William's soul never yet knew fear: he beheld the crimes of a tyrant with as serene an eye as he would the rugged rocks o'er which he roamed, or look at the lowly briar surrounded by its thorns. *Melctal*, rash and impetuous, poured out his fury before William: he listened, but answered not. No tears gushed from his eyes, no ruling passion swayed his countenance, nor unveiled the secrets of his soul. *Tell* loved his friend, but condemned the transports of his precipitate fury: he concealed his grief, that he might not imitate his sorrows; and remained master of his secret purpose until the time was

ripe for execution. Tranquil, inflexible in voice and manner, he spurned his child, and turned from his wife's endearments. Before the accustomed hour he arose; led the oxen to the pasture, where he had once laboured with pleasure: his goad fell from his hand; and, stopping suddenly in the middle of an ill-traced furrow, he folded his arms. His head sunk upon his bosom, his eyes remained fixed on the ground; and thus, scarcely venturing to breathe, he measured in imagination, he calculated the power of the haughty *Gesler*, and the means of destroying it; and (still in fancy) holding with equal hand the balance of reason, poised *Gesler* surrounded by banditti; surrounded by assassins, armed with unlimited power, and supported by a mighty empire, with the efforts of a single man inspired by Liberty.

One evening, when William and his wife were seated before their cottage, they beheld at some distance young Albert exerting all his strength against the bell-weather of the flock: the sight of this boy abandoning himself to the sweets of innocent joy, the idea of the dreadful miseries prepared for him by slavery, threw the feeling *Tell* into a profound reverie; and, for the first time in his life, a tear fell from his eyes. Emma beheld the agonies of his soul; she hesitated for a long time to speak to him: at length, yielding to the impule of love, to the desire of partaking all the griefs of a beloved spouse, she approached him, caught hold of his hand, and looking earnestly in his face, said to him, "What have I done, my love, to merit this cold neglect? what have I done to lose that confidence of which I was so proud? Thou dost suffer evils of which thy wife is ignorant: thou wishest that they should be more painful to *her* than to *thyself*. For these fifteen years past, thou knowest that my thoughts have always waited upon thine; thou knowest that I dared not believe in any happiness, to taste or feel it, until I experienced the sweet certainty that it came from thee. Alas! 'tis in vain I examine *my* heart: it has been, it is, it will always be, the same. Why, then, is *thine* no longer so? Nothing is changed in our home: my husband, can he be changed? Look at our cottage:—'twas here we wooed, 'twas here we loved. Look at this field, cultivated by thyself, the produce of which assures us ample subsistence, and wherewith to give to others. Behold the sweetly smiling moon rising behind our mountains, and announcing to us as beautiful a day as that now departing. Contemplate our son, my love, whose joy, whose innocent mirth, seems formed to excite our smiles, and demand that we should be happy, happy as he is himself. What is wanting, then!

Oh, William! speak: my impatient soul, in anticipation, wishes all thou canst desire,"

"Emma," replied *Tell*, "pronounce not the name of happiness, or thou wilt render more painful the weight which hourly oppresses me. How I lament for thee, unfortunate! if thou canst believe in felicity, if thou canst count upon this humiliating repose, assured it was only by your obscurity, when Switzerland is enslaved; when the barbarous *Gesler*, that insolent emissary of a still more insolent despot, commands us, strikes us on the forehead with a rod of iron! Thou shewest me this harvest, produced by my labour:—*Gesler* with a word can ravage it from me. Thou shewest me this cottage, where my fathers for three centuries past have practised virtue:—*Gesler* can tear it from me. This child whom I adore, this portion of thyself, which occupying all my tenderness, yet redoubles it for thee,—this child depends on *Gesler*. My Field—my Wife—my Son—even the tomb of my honoured father—nothing now is mine!—all, all, are the tyrant's. The very air we breathe wafts only submissive to his will. Oh, height of ignominy!—a people entire—a nation subject to the caprice of one man!—What do I say?—of a Man? . . . . Oh, God! pardon me for having profaned the name of thy greatest work. Humanity can have nothing in common with tyrants; she may be their victim, until the moment when, regaining her rights, she avenges in a single day the outrages of a thousand ages. *This* desire, *this* hope, animates me. My whole soul is insufficient for the grandeur of my designs: seek not to dissuade me from my purpose: seek not to soften my soul with thoughts of thee and Albert. A slave has *no* child— a slave has *no* wife. *I* am a slave, and Nature for me has ceased to be. *Thy* eyes, blinded by love, look with pleasure on this cottage; on this smiling spot, where we once were happy:—*mine*, opened by virtue, can behold nothing but that tower built on the summit of the rock to keep *Uri* in subjection."

"Do'st thou think," replied Emma, "that my heart, unworthy of thine, has not long shuddered at the very name of servitude? do'st thou think that I could love *Tell* without detesting tyrants? Ah! cease, my love, to condemn the softness of female sensibility, which may appear only to be nursed by tender sentiments. Think, my love, that sensibility, though sometimes the mother of weakness, is more often that of the greatest virtues. He who can weep at the sight of misery, at the recital of a good action, proves that he would comfort the one, and that he is capable of the other. Judge thy wife by thyself.—Are there

two natures in us?—Thou adorest thy country: judge, then, whether I ought to love it, since 'tis at once both thine and mine. All the qualities of thy great soul are in my eyes more splendid, because they are thine:—without thee, I had been virtuous: in loving thee, I became doubly so. Speak, then, with confidence; unveil to me thy designs. My sex deprives me of the hope of offering thee a useful succour, but my sex does not hinder me from dying to second thee.

Tell at these words embraced Emma, and was preparing to unveil to her his soul, when shrieks mingled with sighs, were heard from the quarter of their cottage. *Tell* and his wife hastily arose; they perceived their son pale, covered with tears; his hands lifted towards heaven, and running towards them with terror.—"Oh, father! father!" said he, in broken accents, "come, come to his aid!—*Melctal!* ..... *old Melctal!* .... the barbarians have ....." As he spoke, Clara appeared supporting the faultering steps of the unfortunate old man, his right hand leaning on his stick, and his left arm sustained by the inconsolable Clara: he cried at each step, "*Tell!* my dear *Tell!* where art thou?" stretching forth his hands to meet him; till his feet, stumbling against the flinty soil, compelled him to recover the support which he had only for a moment quitted.—William ran, caught the old man in his arms—pressed him to his bosom—looked at him for an instant—gave a terrible shriek: his hair stood an end, to find on his venerable countenance only the bleeding traces of those eyes, of which the barbarians had deprived him. Seized with dread and horror, *Tell* receded from his embrace, nor stopped till a rock impeded his retrograde progress, against which he leaned, convulsed with horror. Emma swooned: Albert ran to her assistance; and Clara, calling to William, pointed to his notice the blind old man, looked up to heaven, and wept.

"Thou fliest from me; my only friend, thou fliest from me," cried *Melctal* in a faultering tone: "thou fearest the blood which issues from my wounds. Oh, William! return, return, to my bosom; my heart yet remains; let me feel it beat and palpitate against thine, let me at least assure myself, in embracing thee, in touching thee, that the barbarians who have torn out my eyes, have not torn from me my friend!"

"Pardon," replied *Tell*, rushing into his arms, "pardon the first emotions of pity and of horror. Oh, thou most virtuous of men! thy misfortunes cannot augment the respect I had for thee; but it augments my tenderness, it renders stronger and more sacred, the cords of affection which allied me to thee.—

O tell me why? how? where? did those villains wound with crimes; where did they dare to raise their hands against virtuous old age? What is become of *Melctal?*—Alas! he died in defending thee. If he yet sees the light, would *he* have abandoned thee? could *he* have left thee in the care of a poor girl, who alas! could do nothing else but weep!—But I will replace thy son; I will inherit both his tenderness and his revenge."

"Accuse not my son," replied the old man: "judge not thy friend without hearing him.—Set me down amongst you; let me feel thee at my side, William; let not Clara leave me; let thy Emma and Albert listen to me with attention!"

They seated the old man on a mossy hillock. *Tell* sate near him, Emma at his back, and sustained on her bosom the old man's head. Clara and Albert, at his knees, kissed his hand, and bathed it with their tears.

"Listen to me," said *Melctal;* "restrain the transports of your tenderness, restrain those of your vengeance. This morning, at the very moment when the last sun which, alas! I shall ever see, gilded the tops of our mountains with his rising beams, my son, Clara, and myself, were in the fields. Clara assisted me to bind the sheaves; my son put them into the cart to which two heifers were yoked to draw the harvest home. On a sudden a soldier appeared, an emissary of the cruel *Gesler.* He came directly to us, trod on our corn, examined the cart, and with an insolent hand unyoked the heifers.—'By what right,' said my son, 'do you take away these animals, my only property, my sole riches: those which support my family, and give to thy Governor the salary thou receivest?'—'Obey,' replied the soldier, 'and question not thy masters.'—At these words I saw fury flaming in the eyes of my son: he seized the yoke of the heifers detached by the satellite, tore it from his hands, and, restrained by my cries, 'barbarian,' said he, 'thank my father: his voice, more powerful in the heart of his son than the wrath of justice, prevents me from ridding the earth of an enemy to humanity.—'Fly, coward! Fly, lest this field should be the tomb of a vile agent of tyranny.'

"The soldier was already out of sight: I held *Melctal* in my arms.—'My son,' said I, 'in the name of heaven, in the name of thy father and thy child, protect thyself: this instant fly from the vengeance of *Gesler.*—I know him; he is implacable; he will bathe himself in thy blood, and with it empurple the grey hairs of thy father. Spare me, my son, my dear son! save *my* life in saving *thine.*'

"'No, father,' replied he with the accents of piety, of ven-

geance, and despair. "No, never will I leave you. I'd rather die in your defence, than tremble a moment for your safety. *Gesler*, and all his power shall not tear me from the arms of him who gave me being. I will, I ought . . . . . .

"'Obey me,' interrupted I, in a tone severe.—'I have nothing to fear: leave me to guard thy cottage and thy daughter; leave me the care of preserving her father and her heritage. Go; conceal thyself a few days in the mountains of *Underwald*. Clara and I will come to thee when the storm is over. Go, fly; this instant fly! I pray thee—I *command thee*—I *insist on it* as thy father.'

"At these words the fiery *Melctal* bowed his head in sadness; he kneeled at my feet, bade adieu, and requested my benediction. I pressed him to my heart; I bathed him with my tears. Clara threw herself on his bosom; Clara wiped off with her kisses the tears which her unfortunate father in vain endeavoured to conceal. Immediately tearing himself from his daughter, he delivered her into my care, pressed my hand, and parted without turning back his head.

"Clara and I, left alone, returned to our cottage:—my intention was to go immediately to the tyrant in Altorff; to see him, and personally convince myself whether every sentiment of justice was a stranger to his soul. Alone, I determined to expose myself to his formidable presence; to obtain the return of my son, or die in asking it:—but on a sudden I found my cottage surrounded by a band of soldiers, all calling out for *Melctal*. They interrogated me, pressed me to discover his retreat, loaded me with chains, and dragged me before *Gesler*. 'Where is thy son?' said he, in a voice sombre and savage. 'Thou shalt either expiate his crime in his stead, or deliver him up to my vengeance.' 'Strike,' said I: 'I thank God that I owe to a barbarian the pleasure of giving life twice to my son.'—*Gesler* viewed me with a fixed eye, which displayed at once a cool thirst of blood, and an embarrassment to discover a punishment proportioned to my years: at length, after a long silence, he made a sign to his executioners; and these monsters, before him, without his even averting his eye, without even the smile of crime certain of impunity, quitting his ferocious countenance, seized me, threw me down, and with a sharp instrument tore my eyeballs from their sockets!!!

"'It is enough,' said *Gesler*: 'let the debilitated old wretch live. Release him; let him go and seek his son'—They led me forth; they pushed me out of the palace gate. I walked with my arms extended—I fell into those of Clara; of Clara,

who had followed me, and whom the cruel satellites had retained at the outposts. I felt myself pressed to her bosom—I felt myself bathed with her tears: I heard, mingled with her cries of grief, this word, this name, so sweet to my soul,—'my father!—my father!—it is I!'—I endeavoured to restrain her cries—I calmed her—I concealed my sorrows—I begged her to lead me to my friend, to the friend of my son. 'We are on our way thither,' she replied. My heart told me so. You spoke—we are arrived!—O, my dear William!—Alas! I can no longer *see* thee; but I *feel* thee near me—I press thy hand in mine!—Ah! how it trembles at the recital of my sufferings!—My son is saved—my friend remains!—Thank heaven, I have not lost my all!"

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

BOOK SECOND.

THUS spoke the old man. As soon as he had finished his narrative, Emma, Clara, and Albert, threw themselves on his neck, drowned his recital with their sobs, and bathed him with their tears. *Tell* remained motionless, his forehead supported on one hand, his looks fixed on the earth: the big tears fell drop by drop from his half closed eyes; his bosom, oppressed with a weighty load, respired with difficulty; the hand which supported his head trembled with convulsive horror. After a long and mournful silence, he suddenly started from his seat, embraced the blind old man, pressed him twice to his palpitating heart; endeavoured to speak, but could only pronounce with a stifled voice—"My father! *thou shalt be avenged.*"

After these words, William relapsed into his former reverie. Sullen, silent, gloomy, and absorbed in thought, he examined, weighed afresh that which he had already examined; and, presently resuming the powers of speech, he asked the old man, in a calm and settled voice, whether he knew where *Melctal* was concealed. "Yes," replied the unfortunate sire, "my son is hid in the deep caverns of the mountain of *Faigel:* those rocks, desart and nearly inaccessible, are yet unknown to the emissaries, the satellites of the tyrant. *Melctal* has promised, has sworn

to me, not to leave it but with my consent."—"Give him back his promise," replied *Tell;* "I request it for him: and thou, my son, prepare thyself to leave hence on the instant. Thou must walk all night: by break of day thou wilt reach the mountain of Faigel. Seek *Melctal*—tarry not until thou hast discovered him. Thou wilt tell him this: thy friend has sent one to thee to inform thee of new crimes committed by the execrable *Gesler*: he has torn out thy father's eyes.—William sends thee this poniard."

Tell then took from his girdle a dagger which he had never parted with. Albert approached in silence and respect to receive the pointed steel at his father's hands, and concealed it in his bosom. Emma and Clara, trembling, did not dare to interrogate William: they looked at Albert, then at each other, and feared to evince their inquietude for the perils he was about to encounter. Old *Melctal,* astonished at the order he had heard, asked *Tell* what were his designs. "Thy son knows them," replied William; "and the sight of this poniard alone will tell him all he ought to do. The moments now are precious: we must not lose them. I have only one word to say—*Father thou shalt be avenged.*"

He then took Albert by the hand, and led him in silence to his father's tomb: there after having received his oath, he confided to him a part of his projects, developed his resources, and instructed him in detail what he should say to *Melctal.*

They both returned animated by a generous hope. Albert was ready for his journey; Clara begged to accompany him: she wished to go and embrace her father; to carry him fruits, bread, and those other necessaries of life which he wanted in the mountains; and old Henry permitted it. Emma filled a wicker basket with provisions, added milk and wine, gave the basket to her son, pressed him to her bosom, bade him farewell, embraced him once again, and requested Clara in a low and trembling voice to watch over a son so dear. Albert, armed with a staff shod with iron, which his father explained the use of, placed the basket on his head, offered his arm to Clara; and in this manner they departed, like two young fawns emerging from the darkest recesses of the thicket to seek more open pasture.

William beheld them go; he was clad in his hunting vest, made of the skin of a savage wolf which he had himself destroyed: this habit, fastened to his body by a broad belt, formed also a covering for his head, where the teeth of the animal fell down and glistened on his forehead. His legs were protected by bus-

kins made of bear skin; a leathern quiver filled with pointed arrows hung over his shoulder; and in his hand he bore that formidable bow which he never yet bent in vain. Leaning on this bow, regarding Emma with a mild yet determined countenance; "my wife," said he, "I am about to leave you, even on the instant. I leave in your hands the father of my friend, this respectable old man, whom *I* honour as my own. Watch over his slumbers; attend him by day and night; succour him, comfort him; assuage his pains and sorrows. Endeavour to acquit yourself of the duties which we owe to misery, to age, to friendship. I will soon return: two days will be sufficient for my purpose. Acquaint no one of my absence; and let the door of our cottage be closed till my return."

He spoke, and left the cottage; and with a rapid hasty pace took a different road from Albert.

Meantime Clara and Albert descended the mountain to gain one of the narrow paths that led to Underwald: they took a circuit above Altorff; rapped at the door of a fisherman, a friend of *Tell*, and requested him to put them across the lake. The good man hasteued to serve his young friends, quickly launched his boat, offered his hand to help them in, and, taking the oars, he struck the transparent wave with equal and sturdy strokes. Landed on the opposite shore, they thanked the friendly boatman, and ascended the barren rocks which on every side surrounded the lake. Clara wanted, in turn, to share the weight of the load with Albert, but he would not consent to it: at length, after an affectionate struggle, they shared it, and, joining their hands under the handle of the basket, they slowly trod the narrow path; now regarding each other with silent looks of love, now stopping as if to take breath, that they might have the longer time to converse more freely.

The moon had already disappeared; already had the morning, slow to rise in these cold regions, begun to shed her silver beams over the shining pinnacles of the snow-clad mountains, when our young travellers reached the foot of lofty Faigel. They ascend the steep, and searched every where if they could discover any goatherd, any peasant, who could point out to them the solitary cave where *Melctal* lay concealed. No human being, save themselves, appeared among these desert rocks. In vain they stretched their sight to its utmost power of vision: nothing was seen but fields of ice; the chamois suspended on the brow of the precipice, or bounding from rock to rock, with the velocity of the eagle, at the sight of their destroyer, man.

About the eighth hour a slight smoke ascending from among

the rocks, attracted the eyes of Albert, who instantly pointed it out to Clara: they flew towards the spot whence the smoke issued, springing over the frozen chasms, traversing thick woods of firs, and arrived at the cavern, which having entered, they perceived at the extremity a twinkling flame. A man was seated before the fire, which he supplied with dry branches of fir: at the noise they made in entering, he turned round, quickly sprung upon his feet, seized his axe, and, holding it raised up, ready to strike, approached our young travellers. "What do want?" exclaimed he in a voice of anger: "whom do you seek?"—"We are your children, my father," answered Clara: —"'tis Albert—'tis your Clara.—We come to bring you nourishment, and fold you in our arms!"

She spoke, and, darting forward, hung on the neck of *Melctal*, who throwing away his axe, uttered a cry of joy, pressed his daughter to his heart, and silenced her with his kisses: then, running to Albert, who regarded them in silence, he embraced him; clasps him in his arms along with Clara; pronounces the name of *his father*—of *Tell*, his faithful friend.—He eagerly interrupted their questions, by the tender caresses which he lavished upon Clara and Albert. At length, leading them to his humble hearth, he placed himself between them, and, seated thus, listened to them with tearful eyes.

Clara, with great precaution, acquainted him with the cause of their coming to seek him; the solemn commands which she bore from the aged Henry. But soon the speech of Clara was broken by frequent sobs: fain would she acquaint him with the horrible misfortune she was bound to disclose, the atrocious crime of *Gesler*. Thrice she commenced the painful recital—thrice she failed in the attempt.—Albert came to her assistance: "Oh! *Melctal*," said he, "behold those tears which we cannot restrain; they are the messengers of fresh misfortunes. My father charged me to acquaint you with them: my father told me that his friend would hear them with resignation; that he would pity his beloved Clara; and that he would suppress his sorrows."—Here the youth related how *Gesler*, the execrable *Gesler!* had revenged himself upon the unhappy Henry. Scarce had he finished the recital, ere the furious *Melctal* rose, firmly grasped his hatchet, and darted towards the mouth of the cave, determined instantly to bathe it in the blood of the cruel *Gesler*. Clara clung to his knees: Albert stood before him.—"Recollect yourself," said he; "think of my father.— Do you no longer think of him? Is he your friend no longer? Listen, however, to what he bade me tell you. William is intent upon revenge;

William is now with *Verner;* and this single word should suffice for you. Hear the orders of my father, which he twice repeated.—'Go, my son; acquaint *Melctal* with this new crime of the tyrant. 'Tis not by furious passion we can be revenged; 'tis by courage and by prudence.—I go to Schweitz, to seek out *Verner*, and arm his canton. Let *Melctal* haste to Stantz; *there* are his friends, the chiefs of Underwald. Let him assemble them; invite them to collect their arms; and immediately afterwards let him wait for me in the cave of Grutly, where *Verner* and myself will not be slow to join."

Melctal listened with attention to Albert, and the melancholy joy of vengeance cast its faint gleam upon his face.—"*Tell* shall be obeyed," replied *Melctal* with transport. "I fly to collect our friends: from to-morrow, Albert, you may assure your father that two hundred of our countrymen, brave, faithful, animated by the love of liberty, ready to yield their latest breath in its defence, and resolved before they die to immolate thousands of the slaves of tyrants on its sacred altar, shall in the market place of Stantz unfurl the banners of liberty. The time draws nigh to try my courage; 'twas restrained only by *Tell*, by the solemn injunctions of my venerable father.—My father—my friend—restore me to myself: let us hasten, let us fly to victory: she is already with us. I burn, I am on fire, to meet the perfidious *Gesler*. Let him come; let him advance against us with his countless satellites, with all his power: I feel more strong than all his force together:—I march to meet him, in the name of liberty—of filial piety—of outraged and disgraced humanity."

He spoke, and would forthwith have taken the road to Stantz. Clara detained him; she entreated him to devote a little time to nature; to grant her one short hour, to enjoy his soothing caresses; and to strengthen his frame, weakened by fatigue and long fasting, with the viands she had brought. The impetuous yet feeling *Melctal* with tears embraced his darling daughter—grasped the hand of Albert—consented to seat himself near the fire; placed one on each side, and with them made a hasty but frugal repast. Soon, however, armed with his hatchet, he bade adieu to his dear children, clasped his daughter to his heart, and, holding Albert by the hand, "Listen to me," said he; "listen to me, my boy. The fate of war is uncertain: I may, perhaps, fall beneath its sword; but even then death will have its pleasures. Oh! it will be sweet so to die; and every noble, feeling heart will envy me my lot. In that hope I wish now to dispose of the only treasure I possess—that treasure the dearest

to my soul, after the liberty of my country—this treasure, my young friend, is my beloved Clara. I give her to you; from this moment she is your's. Behold your spouse, Albert; place your hands in mine: swear by my heart, which now beats palpitating for my country, for you both, for my father—swear to love, to live, to die for one another.—You are now united, my children: receive my blessing, in the name of my father—in the name of my worthy friend."—Clara and Albert dropt on their knees before him, and with pure respect received the paternal benediction. Tears of joy, not of anguish, rolled down their cheeks; *Melctal* himself could not restrain them; and his eyes, animated with the varying passions which filled his ardent soul, sparkled through the shower. He raised his children; again embraced them; bid them again farewell; again repeated his commands for William; then seizing his hatchet, he left the cave with hasty steps, and bent his way towards Stantz.

The two lovers, left alone, dared scarcely suffer their eyes to meet. Mute, motionless, with downcast looks, still holding each other by the hand, they felt a trembling, mixed sensation of joy, of happiness, and fear. Agitated by a crowd of opposing ideas, their souls could scarcely stand the sudden shocks they had experienced: their artless innocence for the first time made them fear to be alone. Albert, the first whose thoughts became settled and collected, at length broke silence in broken sentences:—"Clara, you are mine:—for a long time you have known that Albert lived only for you; but the time, big with fate, the dangers which our fathers run, these forbid us thinking of ourselves. 'Tis to them alone we owe our solicitudes, and every moment of our lives: let us hasten, then, my beloved Clara, to my mother; give her an account of the success of our journey; and when my father, and your venerable grandsire, shall have sanctioned the benediction which *Melctal* has bestowed upon us, then, and not till then, shall I dare to tell you to what happiness I am arrived."

Clara, without answering him, warmly pressed his hand, then left the cavern; and they both retraced the path they had already traversed.

But the sun, though scarcely arrived at half his course, cast but a pale and sickly light through the opaque and misty clouds: a greyish mantle covered the azure sky; and flakes of snow flitting through the air, like the fleces of the lambs which the shears deprive them of, were accumulating towards the north. Soon a cold wind arose, and rolled together with rapid haste the snowy bodies: broken by the wind, they fell like the most

violent torrent of rain, filled all the paths, gathered in drifted mounds, and almost blinded the unfortunate travellers, who could not resist its impetuosity. Clara and Albert, unable to proceed, sought shelter amidst the rocks. The snow, still falling fast, almost covered them. Albert feared for Clara: she, to cheer him, smiled at seeing him covered with the flakes, which she playfully shook off, and gave the winds to scatter. The storm ceased, at length; the refulgent golden beams of the star of day pierced the thick veil which covered them, and reflected themselves like sparkling diamonds on the snowy surface. The two lovers resumed their journey, but they no longer could point out their way: a thick and snowy carpet covered alike the rocks, the fields, the precipices. Albert, leading Clara by the hand, advanced with caution: with his staff he proved the depths of the snow, and he permitted not Clara to take one step till he was assured there was no danger. Clara, fearing but for him, followed in his tracks; held him firmly by the hand, to assist him if he stumbled: yet this long, this painful walk, with every moment fresh dangers attending it, had a thousand charms for the tender Clara.

Constrained to take a circuitous route, to follow the borders of the torrents, where the rapid force of the waters left the banks uncovered by the snow, our travellers consumed the rest of the day, and in the evening arrived near the village of Erfeld. Albert instantly recognized the spot; he was certain to reach Altorff that night by ascending the banks of the Reuss: he encouraged his companion, and the moon, which was just rising, took from him all fear of going astray. More reconciled, they followed the left bank of the river, which waters the Canton of Uri, when they were joined by a man armed with a long cross-bow, and clad in a large cloak which entirely enveloped him. Frozen snow and icicles were alone observed upon his cap, upon his mantle, and his locks, matted together by the hoar: this man met the young couple full in front, who halted at the sight of him. With a broken voice, "my young friends," said he, "in me you behold a wandering hunter. I have lost sight of my companions: I know not the way to Altorff, where my absence must have already caused much uneasiness. Can you conduct me, my young friends? I will amply recompense your zeal and your assistance."—"The reward is in the service itself," quickly answered Clara, "We know the road to Altorff; and we will experience as much pleasure in restoring you to your family, as you would in restoring us to our worthy parents. Follow us, and we will engage to conduct you to the

city in an hour." The hunter joined them, and, observing them with much attention by the brightness of the moon, he walked for some time in silence by their side.

After a while, the stranger, breaking silence, addressing himself to Albert, said—"Young man, what are your parents? Where in Altorff do you dwell?"—"I am the son of a labouring peasant," answered Albert, without noticing him. "My father does not live in the town."—"In what part, then, is his retreat?"—"In the mountains—in the midst of a desert, where he cultivates the fields, and practises the virtues."—"The virtues!" quickly retorted the stranger, with a contemptuous smile: "I should not have thought the name even of virtue was known to you at your age."—"'Twas the first word I lisped," answered Albert, in a firm tone of voice.—"You know, then, what it means?"—"I hope so."—"Explain it, then, to me."—"Three words will suffice: the fear of God, the love of Man, the hatred of their Oppressors."—"And who are their oppressors?"—"Tyrants and their slaves."—"In Switzerland there are no tyrants."—Clara could not contain herself: a cry burst from her. Albert replied not; and the stranger, relapsing into thought, pursued his way in silence.

They approached the walls of Altorff: already they beheld the glittering lances of the soldiers who were on duty at the gates. The gloomy stranger suddenly addressed Albert in a hurried voice, and said, "what is your father's name?" Clara, trembling and afraid, pressed strongly the hand of Albert. He, to whom deceit or falsehood was impossible, hesitated a few minutes; till, urged by the stranger, he looked at him with a steady countenance. "We have been happy to put you in your way," said he; "let that suffice at present. You shall not know from me my father's name: 'tis known only to his friends."—"Imprudent youth!" eagerly exclaimed the stranger, with a voice broken by passion; "your father cannot, shall not, escape me. Nor shall you escape the chains I have prepared for you, but at the moment when I shall know the whole of your seditious family. Know that I have the power and the means to discover and to punish the guilty!"

They reached the gates: the stranger pronounced the name of *Gesler;* and the soldiers, quickly turning out to receive him, presented their pikes before him. "Seize these young people!" exclaimed the ferocious Governor; "drag them to prison; and be careful to bring before me the first inhabitants of Altorff who shall demand their release."

He is obeyed: Clara and Albert were surrounded by the

guards. Without pity for their youth, for the feeble state to which their toilsome journey had reduced them, they are conducted to the citadel, and a gloomy dungeon becomes their abode. Calm in the midst of their disgrace, regarding each other with equal tenderness, they secretlythanked their savage keepers for permitting them to be together, and heard without dismay the heavy door of their dungeon creek slowly on its hinges. They stretched themselves on the straw, thrown to them in pity, and shared the coarse bread which was left for them; fearless, and without remorse, uneasy only at the alarm which their absence must cause at home, and the dangers which threatened William should he confront the tyrant. They hoped, they prayed, that Emma and the aged Henry might still believe them in the cave with *Melctal;* that they might remain ignorant of their misfortunes.

Wholly occupied with this pious idea, these youthful lovers, imprisoned and under the very knife of a merciless barbarian, rested on their flinty bed in peace: no frightful dreams troubled their repose; and they enjoyed that calmness, that serenity of soul, which virtue alone can bestow on us, even in the dungeon. Not so the Governor: surrounded in his splendid palace by numerous bodies of troops, armed with all his power, able by a single word to doom to destruction whomsoever he pleased, *he* could not taste the sweets of sleep, and the most fearful visions fluttered over his troubled fancy. Gloomy, sullen, furious, tormented by a crowd of contending passions, fearing for his life, yet meditating fresh punishments, fresh tortures, for those he dreaded, to preserve that wretched life, to place betwixt his crimes and him a bloody torment, thus reasoned with himself: —"How dreadful must that hatred be which these people bear me, since even their children, their very infants, cannot conceal it from the traveller, the stranger, too, whom chance throws in their way! If *they* so talk, what then must their fathers say? What have I not to fear from a seditious rabble, whose numbers hourly increase, and who cherish the hope of depriving me, together with my sovereign power, of my life—to plunge the dagger to my heart? Yet, I *will* prevent them: yes, I shall suppress with threats and terror those who shall escape my angry justice. I shall contrive new means to know my enemies: *all* are so, I doubt not; yet shall not *all* dare to own it; and the boldest shall perish first, just victims to my vengeance."

He gave himself entirely up to wrath, to the maddening dictates of his furious passions—revolved in his almost distracted mind a thousand rude undigested projects—adopted them—

dismissed them—cherished the wild chimeras of his tortured brain—and gave, in his imagination, the most merit to those orders he then framed, which appeared best to express the contempt he felt for the very beings whom he dreaded; and he finally came to the resolution of adopting that project of a madman, by which all the inhabitants of Uri were forced basely to bow their heads before that cap which their atrocious Governor had worn.

In vain did reason, now almost astray, present to him the dangers of this absurd, this useless order: reason was no longer listened to. He instantly summoned the chief officers of his guards; enquired with eager anxiety upon the zeal, the devotion, the attatchment of the mercenary soldiers; distributed amongst them the riches which his avarice yielded up to his fears; and, addressing *Sarnem*, the faithful secret minister of his most guilty thoughts, "to-morrow," said he, hastily, "to-morrow, at the dawn of day, let a lofty poll be erected in the centre of the market place of Altorff. On the summit let this cap, which I now deliver into your hands, be placed, exposed to every eye. Let my brave troops in arms surround the place, guard every avenue, and oblige the passing slaves to bow with reverence and respect before this emblem of my power, of the dignity of the Governor of these Cantons: let the least disobedience, the slightest murmers even, against my will, be punished instantly by close imprisonment. Let it be your care to read in their countenances, in their eyes, and in the expression of the looks of these base men whom Nature has ordained for slaves, the secret sentiments of hatred, of independence, of courage; for even bravery is a crime in those whose duty it is only to obey. Go! execute my will: and, more, let all our spies be employed to discover, if possible, the guilty parents of those two young persons whom I have ordered to be kept in chains."

He spoke, and *Sarnem*, obedient to his will, hastened to fulfil his orders. The soldiers received in advance the wages of their guilty purpose; both wine and money were prodigally distributed amongst them. The spies of *Gesler* spread themselves throughout the city, in the vicinity; sought to introduce themselves into the different families, in order, by relating a false tale of pity, how two young persons had become the victims of *Gesler's* cruelty, to discover what effect this would produce amongst the people, to convert into a crime even the feelings of pity and compassion.

But heaven, all-righteous heaven, who watched over the lowly cot of *Tell*, concealed it from the search of *Gesler's* emis-

saries: they disturbed not the peaceful dwelling of the virtuous Emma, who alone, with the aged, sightless Henry, counted the tedious hours, far from her husband, from her son.—The night passed slowly on in this uncertain state of anxious expectation:—the solitary lamp, which shed its glimmering light upon them, still continued to burn; and neither the aged Henry, nor the good, the gentle Emma, as yet felt disposed to taste the refreshing aid of sleep. They spoke with anxious fondness of their children: the slightest murmers of the wintry blast, the least noise without, made them listen at the door. The bleak north wind, whistling through the lofty branches of the trees, now robbed of their leafy honours; the barking of their faithful dog, who traversed his accustomed path around the cottage, every instant gave new hope to Emma. She arose—she ran towards the door, every moment expecting Albert. She looked through the casement—she beheld nothing but the shades of night—she listened—she heard only the roaring of the torrent. Sad with hopes betrayed she slowly returned to her seat beside the old man, from whom she fain would hide her fears and her anxieties. "Your son has detained them," said she, endeavouring to suppress the rising sigh. "Do, my good old man, do take some rest: sleep, and I will watch over thee till morning."—"Yes, my child," answered Henry, "my son has no doubt detained them. I yield to your entreaties; I will court repose:—but heed me not, I pray: compose yourself, and calmly hope the best."—The old man at length, to satisfy her, feigned to sleep:—They both preserved silence, in order to lull each other into a deceitful security; both endeavoured to suppress the sighs which struggled hard for utterance. At the slightest noise, they both arose with eager haste; but, alas! their hopes were alike deceitful.

END OF BOOK SECOND.

BOOK THIRD.

Meantime *Tell*, long before the peep of day, had arrived within the walls of Schwitz: he knocked at the door of *Verner*. The faithful mastiffs, steady to their trust, made the place resound with their loud and hollow bark. *Verner*, restless in his mind, already seated before a blazing fire, hastened to the door, opened it at the voice of his friend, and led him to the cheering hearth. The surly, threatening animals no sooner recognized the faithful friend of their master, than they overwhelmed him with their rude caresses, and sought to hide their enormous heads beneath the benumbed, half frozen hands of William.

"My friend," exclaimed the hero, "the hour is at length arrived when we must deliver our country from its scourge, or perish in the glorious cause of Liberty. 'Tis not your cautious prudence that I now consult; 'tis not from your experienced wisdom that I ask advice; 'tis your courage I would rouse. No more in tardy council must we now debate. Crime heaped on crime accumulates too fast; and *Gesler*, *Gesler* himself, has sounded the signal of revolt."

With these words he threw down a heavy bundle of various arms, of pikes, of cross-bows, arrows, and well proved swords, which he bore upon his shoulders. *Verner* beheld them with a smile of joy:—"Before I listen to one word more," said he, "I must conceal this precious treasure. We may be surprised; for, when we are dependant on a despot's will, our house no longer is our castle."

They then, taking the bundle of arms together, concealed it in a place of perfect safety. Returned and seated by the fire, William related to *Verner* the barbarity of the Governor—the dire misfortune of the aged Henry—the flight of his son *Melctal* —the journey of Albert in search of him—and that Albert, at this very hour, should be at Grutty to assure *Melctal* of their co-operation.—*Verner* listened with deep attention; made him repeat the details of William's bold designs; weighed them; discussed them with him; invented obstacles which it was possible they might encounter; till satisfied by the replies of *Tell*,

who had foreseen and guarded against every casualty, he grasped his hands, and exclaimed with fervor, "my friend, let us commence the glorious work!—*Verner* is ready."

Separately, and by opposite roads, they carried one by one the arms which they had deposited, securely to their friends in the city—to their friends in the villages by which Schwitz is surrounded: they placed in the hands of the enemies of tyranny both the means of its destruction and their own revenge; they thanked the chilling frost; they thanked the showers of snow, which, falling in abundance, obscured the day, and rendered trackless the roads which they had passed in safety. Repeatedly did they return to distribute the arms, which they were obliged singly to do. They employed full twelve hours on this important work, inspiring the hearts of those whom they thus armed, receiving their sacred oaths in the presence of the Almighty; acquainting them with the crimes of *Gesler*, animating them to revenge, and with increased ardour varying their exhortations to point out fresh paths that might lead to Freedom.

The entire day was consumed in this occupation: all the arms were distributed. William retained nothing but his bow; *Verner*, a single pike. At length, almost overcome with fatigue, they entered *Verner's* house, took a slight refreshment; and, regardless of repose, pressed by the appointed time, which quick approached, by the promise made to *Melctal*, they quitted once more the city, and took the road to the cavern of Grutty.

They marched along through the deep snows which the keen northern blast had collected around them; they arrived at the borders of the lake, sought a boat in the darkness, and found a frail and almost shattered bark moored strongly to the shore, and which the urging waves, raised high by the whistling north, dashed against the rocky bank. *Verner*, seeing the lake so much disturbed, asked William, if, skilful as he was known to be, he would venture to struggle against the tempest. "*Melctal* is waiting for us," exclaimed *Tell*, "and our country's fate depends upon our meeting. Do you ask me if I can cross the lake?—I know not that the thing is possible; but I know that it must be done. I count but little on my long tried skill; but I trust to the God of Heaven and Earth, who watches over souls so pure as ours, and who delights in the protection of the sons of Freedom."

He spoke, and sprung into the boat: *Verner* followed him. *Tell* hastily cut the rope which held her to the shore, seized the oars, and pushed off from the bank; but whether it was the effect of chance, whether the all-just and powerful God whom

William silently invoked, watched over the deliverers of Switzerland, the wind suddenly fell calm; the high-swollen wave decreased, and on its now even surface lightly bore the bark of *Tell*, who, seizing the oars, made his way with the rapidity of an arrow. He quickly crossed the lake, arrived at the opposite shore, leaped out, fastened his boat, and the two friends hastened to the cavern which had long been known to them.

Melctal was waiting for them at the entrance. No sooner did he perceive *Tell* than he darted forward, and sprung into his arms; pronounced in sobbing accents the names of his father, and his friend; confounded the two names so dear; and scarcely could contain the varying sentiments which almost overpowered him. William wept with him; held his hand, which he pressed with force; led him to the bottom of the cave; and there, obscured in darkness, the three friends, seated on the rocks, thought not of their own personal griefs, but their whole souls were wrapt up in the destiny of their country. *Tell* was the first to speak:—"*Melctal,*" said he, "thy father lives; he is safe beneath my roof: be satisfied of this, and let your filial piety give place to your duty to your country. We must examine, we must find out the means, most sure, most prompt, to deliver her; to restore her to her freedom; to revenge the injuries, the barbarities, the excesses, she so long has endured. Each of us in our respective Cantons enjoys the esteem, the attachment, the confidence of our brethren. The brave inhabitants of Schwitz will obey the voice of *Verner:* they only wanted arms, which this day *Verner* and myself have given them. These arms, added to what our friends at Schwitz had already procured, will insure us two hundred well armed soldiers, who have chosen *Verner* for their leader.—We have their faith pledged to us—we have their oaths:—we may trust to them even as to ourselves.

"In Uri, within the walls of Altorff, where the presence of the tyrant augments and nourishes the terror, where the strong citadel he has built seems to bid defiance to our efforts and secure his power, I found it more difficult to find adherents to our cause. Every heart, 'tis true, glowed with the love of liberty: but the numerous satellites of *Gesler*, his infamous emissaries, watched with the most scrupulous care to discover and to extinguish the smallest spark of this most sacred fire. As yet, I cannot reckon on the strength of Altorff:—the people groan beneath the rod of despotism; daily they behold the deadly axe raised over him, who with a suspicious eye regards the haughty Governor. The people of Altorff will not attack him; but they

will not defend him: Altorff must, then, be conquered. But in the villages which surround it, I have found an hundred chosen companions, ready to die with me:—they are well armed —they are brave: this is all that I can offer.—Speak, *Melctal;* acquaint us with the result of your efforts in Underwald; and let us now irrevocably fix the hour, the instant, when we shall unite our strength, and lead to victory or death."

"My friends," replied *Melctal*, "I was far from counting on the force which is already in your hands, and yet I was confident of success. An hundred and fifty youthful warriors are already prepared in Underwald; this very day have I met them. They chose me for their chief, and burn for the combat. My friends, let us not lose an instant; let us assemble this very night under the walls of Altorff; let us unite our trusty bands in the very heart of the city; let us attack the fort without delay. The people will assist us.—We will punish this cruel Governor, and let his eyes be torn out in the very place where my father ..... But I rave; pardon a wretched son. I repeat, however, that spite of the night—spite of the snow which now covers the earth, and renders the roads almost impassible—let us assemble by to-morrow's dawn in the market place of Altorff, and let a sudden attack make us masters of the citadel, or bury us in its ruins!"

"Yes, we will doubtless perish," calmly replied *Verner;* "and this death, glorious 'tis true, will be useless to our country. You do not, *Melctal*, clearly comprehend what William has just told us. The hundred friends of whom he is so certain are dispersed among the villages of Uri: we must have time to collect them. As four thousand well trained troops are constantly on duty near the tyrant, the people of Altorff groaning beneath the weight of *Gesler's* power, of his guards, his numerous army, dare not attempt to join us. Our little army, arriving in a tumultuous manner, in different groupes, will not be able to obtain admission to the city, but may be buried under its ramparts. The three Cantons together are too weak to overturn the power of *Gesler*, who, trusting to the great colossal strength of the German empire, possesses many fortified places; to lay seige to which, however short, would give time to the Austrian troops to be reinforced to thrice the number of our population. Trust to my experience; let us be well assured of ample succour before we attempt our enterprise. Think you that *we* alone shall be the only friends to Freedom? Think you that Zurich, Lucerne, the inhabitants of the rough mountains of Zug, of Glaris, and of Appenzel, do not shudder like ourselves, over-

whelmed by the chains of slavery? Doubt not but that these generous people suffer equally with us the glorious thirst of independence. My heart foretels to me that they will one day become a part of ourselves—a Republic dreaded and respected by all the Kings and Princes of the Universe.—Let us, then, hasten the glorious day; let us dispatch deputies to Lucerne, to Zug, to Zurich; let us organize a general conspiracy; let us fix the day, the sacred day, when, at the same hour throughout all Switzerland, all the friends of Liberty shall at the same time attack their tyrants. Then shall we blaze forth—then shall Altorff declare itself; and the astonished Governor, surrounded by an armed people, shall fall beneath our efforts, before his messengers, every where intercepted, can bear the tidings of his danger to the Emperor, his master."

Verner was silent. *Melctal* still murmered, and seemed disposed to combat his arguments; when William began, and both listened in respectful silence. "I admire your boldness," said he to *Melctal;* "I excuse your ardour; but it would be fatal to our purpose. I honour, I respect, your prudent caution, *Verner:* but it also has its dangers. Those conspiracies can never prosper which are not entrusted to a faithful few:—a single word, a single error, the most trifling accident, can overturn the well laid plan of many years.—In the various towns and villages which we propose to associate in our great design, a single traitor will be sufficient to overturn our purpose; to give his devoted country a prey to fire and sword; and to behold her chosen sons, her favourite patriots, perish disgracefully upon the scaffold.—No! let us confide to no one our great, our sublime, designs. We, I trust, are in ourselves a host—we, I hope, will suffice to lay the foundation of our country's freedom: and when Uri, Schwitz, Underwald, shall have displayed upon their mountain tops the standard of Liberty, we or our sons will see the other Cantons bravely fighting under the sacred banner, or reposing beneath its shade.

"*Verner*, it is full time that our plans should burst the veil. But I must intreat you, *Melctal*, to allow me yet a few days more.—Hear, then, my plan, which I now submit to you.

"Underwald and Schwitz are armed. Three hundred and fifty warriors of these two Cantons are ready, you say, to attend your steps; appoint a rendezvous for them; not in a city, not in a village, but in some sequestered vale—some desert, unfrequented spot, where assembling by different routes, they can readily unite, and put themselves in motion at the same instant. While you are employed on this business, I shall return to Uri, where, seconded

by the brave *Furst*, the only one of my companions to whom I have confided my plans, I will assemble the hundred enemies of tyranny, whose stifled murmurs and whose courage have made me deem them worthy of being our associates in the glorious enterprise: the brave *Furst* will seek them in Maderan and Ursereen, even amongst the lofty mountains from which the Aar, the Tesen, the Rhine, and the Rhone, derive their rapid sources. I alone will remain at Altorff, where a messenger from *Furst* will acquaint me of the instant when his valiant troop shall be in motion. Instantly on the receipt of this intelligence, I will set fire to an immense pile of faggots, which with my own hands I have already raised on the mountain near my cottage. When you shall perceive the flames ascending from this beacon, do you, *Verner*, and you, *Melctal*, immediately depart with your brave followers for the appointed place of meeting; from thence, when you shall have formed a junction, march directly on towards Altorff. I have already calculated the time—the distance. *Furst* with the brave sons of Uri, *Verner* with those of Schwitz, and *Melctal* with those of Underwald, will arrive nearly at the same instant, at noon, at the north and east gates of the city.—I, my gallant friends, will be alone, in the midst of the people, whom my voice, my efforts, shall rouse to action in the cause of Liberty. My lips shall make the sacred name resound throughout the city; and Liberty! Liberty! shall be our cry: you shall pronounce it when you enter the city's walls. The people, astonished and surprised to see, to hear at the same time, that Uri, Schwitz, and Underwald, have flown to their assistance—the people, I repeat, yielding only to their hatred, their fury, against *Gesler*, will join in crowds our valiant troops. We will attack the citadel, which the tyrant, taken by surprise, will in vain be able to defend. Soon shall we behold our sacred banner waving over the frowning battlements; and all Switzerland, astonished at this our first, this daring effort, will seek the high honour of being associates in our future combats."

He spoke. *Melctal* threw himself on his neck, and bathed the hero with tears of joy. *Verner* himself was persuaded; *Verner* adopted his opinion. The three deliverers, without uniting themselves to each other by fresh oaths, oaths unnecessary to their great souls! the three heroes separated, after deciding that they would not commence their march until the moment that the flaming signal should be given by William. *Melctal* returned to Stantz, to prepare his friends for the occasion: *Verner* and *Tell* returned to their boat, and crossed the peaceful lake. *Verner* took the road to Schwitz, and William that to Altorff.

He walked in gloomy thoughtfulness on the margin of the lake, and determined ere he returned home to visit his friends in Altorff, and inform them of his grand designs. The sun had not yet set behind the mountains when he reached the town; he advanced as far as the market place, where the first object which attracted his attention was a lofty pole erected in the centre, on the top of which he distinguished a rich cap bordered with gold. Around the pole a great number of soldiers walked in silence, and seemed to guard with respect this new emblem of power and domination. William walked forward, astonished; and presently he perceived the people of Altorff prostrate themselves before this cap! before this pole! and the armed satellites of the tyrant curb still lower with the points of their lances, those who thus humiliated themselves. Scarcely master of his indignation, *Tell* recoiled on his own: he would not believe his eyes; he remained mute and motionless, rested himself on his bow of yew, and beheld with disdain the cowardice of the people and the villany of the soldiers.

Sarnem, who commanded the guard: *Sarnem*, whose ferocious zeal delighted in going beyond the orders of the tyrant, soon distinguished that man who alone, in the midst of a people degraded and enslaved, stood upright with the firm dignity of manly pride. He hastened towards him, and, looking at him with eyes boiling with fury, "whoever thou art," said he, "tremble, lest I punish thy tardiness in obeying the orders of *Gesler!*—Art thou a stranger to the proclamation which obliges every inhabitant of Altorff to salute with respect this emblem of his power?"—"I was ignorant of it," replied William; "nor could I have thought that the intoxication of the supreme power could have ever arrived at this excess of tyranny, of madness, and of folly: but he is justified by the cowardice of the people. I excuse and approve *Gesler:* he ought to treat us as slaves; he cannot sufficiently despise those who can submit to such degradation. As to me, I never bow the knee, save to the God whom I adore."—"Audacious wretch!" replied *Sarnem;* "thou shalt expiate thy audacity. Fall on thy knees, and disarm the vengeance of that hand which can punish thee."—"My own should punish me," exclaimed *Tell*, looking him sternly in the face; "my own should punish me, if I were capable of obeying thee."

He ended. The cruel *Sarnem* gave a signal:—immediately a number of the soldiery seized William, tore from him his bow, and deprived him of his quiver. Surrounded by numerous glittering swords, all directed to his heart, they led him, they dragged him, before the Governor.

Calm in the midst of the soldiery, deaf to their gross insults, he crossed his arms upon his manly breast: he appeared before the tyrant—he beheld him with a look of disdain; let the accuser speak without interruption; and, in a silence which insult could not break, he waited the interrogatories of *Gesler*.

The dignity of his manner, the calm serenity of his countenance, disturbed the Governor: an involuntary terror, a secret presentiment, seemed to whisper to his heart that he beheld before him the punisher of his crimes, THE DELIVERER OF SWITZERLAND:—he could not bear to look at him. He hesitated to interrogate him: at length, in a tremulous voice, he said, "what motive could prompt thee to disobey my orders?—to disregard the sign, be it what it might, of my power, the respect and homage which thou owest to me? Excuse thyself: I know how to pardon."—William looked at him with a disdainful smile: "punish me," said he, "but ask not my thoughts. Thou hast *never* heard the truth; thou *canst* not hear it."—"Prove it," replied *Gesler;* "let me hear it from thy mouth. I wish to be instructed by thee, by thyself, in my errors and my duties."—"I instruct not tyrants," replied *Tell;* "yet the horror which their presence inspires does not deprive me of my courage. I can recal their crimes, I can predict their fate. Listen, then, since thou do'st consent to hear me.

"The measure is soon filled. The cup of misery which angry heaven has remitted to thy care overflows on every side; his vengeance, now fulfilled by thee, will next in justice strike thyself. Hear the cries of the innocent confined in thy dungeons; hear the cries of the children and the widows, who ask at thy hands their husbands and their fathers, expiring by thy order with protracted torments. Their bleeding shades wander round thy dwelling. Seest thou not that ghastly form?—'tis the shade of a murdered father. Now, it raises its hands to heaven for vengeance; now, it bends to earth for its suffering wife and infant children: it will pursue thee in thy dreams, in the shape of a body covered with villainous wounds. Its blood will gush upon thy hands, and awake thee at the midnight hour: this blood shalt thou see in the shades of night; thou *shalt see it*, and in vain will thy closing eyes endeavour to hide it from thy sight!—The few who remain alive will abandon their dwellings, and their little all, the fruit of years of labour, to thy insatiate avarice; they will fly, they will conceal themselves in the forests and in shelving rocks. Then, what will this trembling people do?—a people to whom thy name inspires greater terror than the falling of the mountain snows about to bury our villages. What will they do?—Kneeling on the rocks,

they will supplicate heaven for vengeance; supplicate heaven to exterminate the destroyer of mankind! Yes, *Gesler*, I forewarn thee of it. The cries of so many persecuted innocents, despoiled, debased, immolated by thy order; *this* blood shed hourly by thy hands, the vapour of which forms a thick and impervious cloud around thee; *this* blood is ascended to heaven: its supplicating cries have reached the throne of mercy, have reached the throne of the Deity, and soon will his justice strike thee!—My country's deliverance it at hand: such my wishes, such my thoughts, and such my fondest hopes. Thou requested my sentiments: art thou satisfied?—I have nothing more to add; for I will not degrade my reason so far as to tell thee a word respecting those mad decrees, those orders of a worse than madman, which dooms the unfortunate people of Uri to bow before the cap which covered *thy* head. Thou knowest all, and now mayest thou command my punishment."

Gesler listened in silence, and contained his wrath the better to bring it down more heavily on the victim's head: he suspended his rage in the hope of finding, of inventing a punishment which could avenge him most of a man who appeared to despise death. He thought of those children whom he had the evening before confined in chains; he recalled to mind their firm and undaunted manner: and, comparing it with what he had just heard, his ingenious fury suspected, divined, that those children, already so proud, so deeply impressed with the hatred of tyranny, could only belong to him who braved his wrath. He determined to assure himself of the truth, and gave a secret order that they should be brought forth.

Sarnem hastened to fetch them. During this period the cunning *Gesler*, dissimulating his wrath, feigned an indifference of thought; coolly interrogated William respecting his situation, his family, and the rank he held in Uri. William did not conceal his name; and this name, famous in Altorff, struck the Governor with terror and alarm.—"Why!—how!" said he, with surprise and fear mingled in his countenance, "is it thee?—thee, so renowned for conducting a boat across the tempestuous lake?—thee, so expert at the bow?—whose arrows never miss their aim?"—"Even so," replied *Tell;* and I blush that my name should only be known by unavailing attempts in my country's cause. This vain glory is unworthy the death I am about to suffer in pronouncing the name of Liberty."

At that instant *Sarnem* returned leading Clara and Albert. When *Tell* perceived his son, he uttered a shriek of joy, and flew towards him. "O Albert!" he cried, "O my son! I can embrace thee yet!—but where?—how?—why . . . .?"—"No!

no! you are not my father," Albert immediately replied, who saw William's danger, and knew the fate which *Gesler* had prepared for his unfortunate father. "No; I repeat it, I do not know you. *My* family [looking round him] are not here."—William, astonished, remained motionless, his arms open and extended: he could not comprehend why his son should refuse his embraces, and dare to deny any knowledge of him. Clara augmented his surprise in confirming what Albert had said, and repeating with him that William was not their father. The heart of *Tell* murmured at the fact, and began to be angry at the measure; whilst *Gesler*, whose savage eyes observed their varied emotions; *Gesler*, who now had penetrated the mystery which he wished to know; enjoyed at once the fear, surprise, and sorrow, of the father and his children.

A horrid joy diffused itself over his countenance; his eyes sparkled with the red fire of vengeance.—"I am not to be deceived," said he. "William, behold thy son, and this son has excited my wrath. My patience, wearied with thy outrages, at length has found a punishment proportioned to thy audacity. I will pronounce it:—listen.

"I wish, even in punishing thee, to render homage to this rare talent of which thy happy country boasts so much; I wish, that, in contemplating *my* justice, the people of Altorff should admire *thy* skill. They shall give thee back thy bow; they shall place thy son before thee at the distance of an hundred paces. An apple shall be placed upon his head; that apple shall be the mark for thy arrow If thy hand, sure of its aim, carries the apple away with the arrow, I will show mercy to you both; restore you both your liberty. If thou refusest this proof, thy son shall die before thine eyes."

"Barbarian!" replied *Tell*, "what demon from the regions of the damned, can have inspired thee with such an idea?—O, God! who hearest us at this moment, wilt thou suffer these horrible excesses of the genius of cruelty?—No! I will not accept the proof; no! I will not expose myself to the danger of becoming the murderer of my son!—I ask for death; I implore it of thy executioners: they are all here; all who surround thee have drenched their guilty hands an hundred times in blood. Let them turn their swords on me; let them be levelled at my heart! I beg it of thee; I conjure thee to do it! Let me but die innocent; let me die as a man, and as a father!—Hear me, *Gesler:* thy numerous guards, the example of a whole people, the certitude, the sight of punishment, could not make me bow before thee: I preferred death to such baseness. But now, to

obtain that death, to escape from the dreadful danger of murdering my child, see me kneel before thee!—Promise me death, *Gesler*. I will bow before thy pride!"

"No!" cried Albert, whose youth and manners touched with pity the hearts even of the satellites; "no! yield not to his request.—I accept—I accept the proof: be it as thou hast promised. My father shall be free! Courage, courage, my worthy Sire! Heaven will guide thy hand. Fear not; thy son is in safety. Pardon me if my tenderness could for a moment forget my father. I trembled for thee, and thee alone: to save thee, I abandoned what is dearer to me than all the world,—the name, the endearing name, of thy son!—O, my father! pardon me, my father! my beloved father! Permit me to repeat an hundred times that name which but so lately I refused to acknowledge.—Be of good courage: thou wilt not kill me. A secret voice whispers to my heart that I am safe.—Lead me forth: lead me forth!—Clara go; but take care not to acquaint my mother."

Albert threw himself into William's bosom, who received, embraced, and pressed him to his heart: he wished to speak; he drowned him with his tears: he could only repeat, with a trembling and stifled voice, "No, my son! no, my dear son!"—Clara swooned; the soldiery carried her into the palace: and the inflexible *Gesler*, without being moved at this spectacle, repeated his terrible order; offered for the last time to William the choice of seeing his son perish before his eyes, or accepting the proof. William heard him; his head was bent, and his eyes fixed on the earth; he remained a few moments without giving any reply, still holding Albert in his arms. He suddenly raised his head—looked at the Governor; his eyes were red with tears, and flamed with indignation.—"I will obey," replied he. "Lead me forth!—I will obey!"

The father and the son, holding each other by the hand, were immediately surrounded by the guards; they left the palace together under the conduct of *Sarnem*. The people were already informed of the horrid spectacle about to be exhibited, and hastened to the market place. Each murmured from the bottom of his heart, but each feared to express a sentiment of pity. Their fearful looks sought William; they discovered him surrounded by lances, walking by the side of Albert, who smiled as he went on; tears, however, gushed in his eyes, when he beheld the looks of his father; but terror restrained those tears —*Gesler* would have punished them as a crime. Every eye was bent to the earth: a melancholy silence reigned amongst the people; they felt, suffered, and were silent.

The space was already measured by the savage *Sarnem;* a double line of soldiers enclosed this space on three sides: the people pressed behind them. Albert, at the extremity, beheld all the preparations with a countenance tranquil and serene. *Gesler*, at some distance behind *Tell*, remained surrounded by his guard, and observed with inquietude the melancholy silence of the people; and William, surrounded with lances, remained with his eyes thoughtfully cast on the ground. They presented him his bow and a single arrow: after having tried the point, he broke it, and asked for his quiver. They brought it: he emptied it on the ground, examined, chose amongst his arrows, remained some time kneeling, seized a favourable moment, and concealed an arrow under his dress; he took another in his hand, that which he meant to use. *Sarnem* ordered the remainder to be taken away, and William slowly strung his bow of yew.

He looked at his son—stopped—raised his eyes to heaven—threw down the bow and the arrow—and begged to speak to Albert. Four soldiers led William to him. "My son," said he, "I must embrace thee once more. I must repeat what I have already told thee: be motionless, my son; rest with one knee on the ground: thou wilt then be more firm, or more certain of not moving. Thou wilt pray to God, my son, to protect thy unfortunate father.—Oh, no! pray only for thyself: let not the idea of thy father unnerve thee; 'twould weaken, perhaps, that heroic and manly courage which I admire, though I cannot imitate it. No, my son! I can never shew myself so great as thee.—Preserve! preserve, that fortitude of which I should wish to give thee an example. Yes; remain thus—thus, my boy! as my fondest hopes could wish.——Could wish!—Wretch that I am!——O thou Most High, thou permittest!—hear me, Albert: turn thy head; thou do'st not know, thou canst not foresee, the effect which it would have on thee, to see the glittering steel levelled at thy face. Turn thy head, my boy! and do not look at me."—"No! no!" replied the boy; "fear nothing: I will look at you. I shall not see the arrow; I shall only see my father."—"O, my dear boy!" cried *Tell*, "don't speak to me! don't speak! Thy voice, thy accent, will deprive me of my strength. Cease, pray to God, and do not stir!"

William embraced him anew—turned to leave him;—embraced him once more—repeated his last words—placed the apple n his head—and hastened to the spot assigned for him.

He took his bow and his arrow; fixed his eyes on the mark so dear; twice he essayed to raise his bow, and twice it fell from

his paternal hands. At length, summoning up all his skill, his strength, and courage, he wiped the tears from his streaming eyes; invoked the Great Eternal, who from heaven's high throne watches over parents; and, nerving his trembling arm, he endeavoured, he accustomed his eye to see nothing but the apple. Profitting by the only moment, swift as thought when he could forget his son, he drew the bow;—the arrow whizzed on the wing, cleft the apple, and carried it away.

The place resounded with the shouts of joy. Albert flew and embraced his father, who pale and motionless, overcome with the effort he had made, returned not his caresses: he looked at him: his eyes were swollen with tears; he scarcely heard what his son said to him: his knees tottered—he was ready to fall. He fell into the arms of Albert, who discovered the arrow concealed beneath his clothes.

Gesler was already near him; *Gesler* snatched the arrow. William recovered his senses, and immediately fixed his eyes on the cruel *Gesler*, who instantly addressed him: "unequalled archer!" said he, "I will fulfill my promise; I will pay the price of thy astonishing skill. But, first, tell me what was intended by this arrow, which thou concealed from my sight. Only one was necessary: for what purpose was this?"—"To pierce thy heart, tyrant," replied *Tell*, "if my unfortunate hand had shortened the days of my son!"

At these words, which a father could not retain, the terrified Governor rushed into the midst of his satellites. He revoked his promise; he ordered *Sarnem* to load William with chains, and conduct him to the fortress. They obeyed; they tore him from Albert's embrace, who desired in vain to accompany his father. The guards repulsed Albert: the people murmured, but were compelled to stifle their sentiments. *Gesler* hastened to his palace, and ordered all his troops to be in arms. Numerous platoons of Austrians paraded in every part of the city, and compelled the affrighted inhabitants to conceal themselves in their houses.—Terror reigned in Altorff, and the executioners with savage anxiety waited for new victims.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

BOOK FOURTH.

While the restless tyrant secured himself within his fortress, doubled the guards around the ramparts, and dreaded lest the populace, enraged, should endeavour to rescue William, Albert, the unhappy Albert, with tearful eyes and arms extended, demanded of all he met to restore to him his father. Repulsed by the ferocious soldiery, who guarded every avenue, with agonizing shrieks he paced around the citadel. Clara who during the horrid scene had been detained in the palace, at length escaped the watchfulness of those who guarded her, and sought Albert on every side: she succeeded in finding him, flew into his arms, and sought to dry his tears. "My father is in chains!" said Albert; "my unhappy father is about to perish! Clara, listen to me: I have lost the cheering hope of gaining admittance to his prison, of remaining with him, of attending him, and ending my life with his. I will yet attempt the only chance now left me of his safety. I hasten to Underwald: I will acquaint your father of the danger of his friend. *Melctal* has many friends; *Melctal* is brave, has arms, and will fly to his deliverance. I intreat you, my good, my much loved Clara, return to my mother; tell her what has happened, and what I am gone about. Go, Clara; go quickly and console her. I shall not return without *Melctal*—I will perish, or I will save my father! You must supply my place to my beloved mother."

He spoke, and, directly leaving Clara, in eager haste he leaves the city, and soon reaches the mountains. Clara hastily returned towards the cottage of *Tell*, where the old Henry, where the gentle Emma, far from William, from their children, whose fate they knew not, consumed the hours in anxious expectation.

The sudden arrival of Clara, pale, and almost breathless with fear, and suffused with tears, increased the agonies of Emma: she arose, and flew towards her; at the same time exclaiming, "Albert!—Albert, my son! Where, where is my boy?"—"He is alive! he is at liberty!" hastily answered Clara, who threw herself into her grandsire's arms,—embraced him, embraced Emma; and in a faultering voice she then related all that had

happened; how they were led from prison to be confronted with *Tell;* and the dreadful alternative to which both the father and the son were compelled to submit. She knew not much more, but that William was in prison, loaded with chains; Albert, to procure his father's deliverance, had gone to seek out *Melctal; Tell* was threatened with death, and the Governor had sworn it.

At this melancholy recital, Emma, overwhelmed with grief, fell senseless on the bench she sat. The old man, in frantic agony, uttered the most lamentable cries; he insisted on being taken to his son—would fight with him, and perish in assisting to deliver William. Clara with difficulty restrained the pitiable old man, runs to the assistance of Emma, and exerts her tender cares to soothe these two unhappy parents.

At length, after the first effusions of so deep a sorrow, old Henry regained the coolness of reason; regained his courage and his prudence; seized the hands of Emma, already on his lap, and pressed them to his heart. "Weep not," said he, "my virtuous friend, weep not: let us not lose in vain tears a period, every moment of which is so precious. Albert is in Underwald; in a few hours he will reach my son.—I know *Melctal.* This very night, *Melctal,* followed by all his friends, will take the route to Altorff; he will reach there to-morrow, and attempt every thing to save William. But, perhaps, the few friends he has may be insufficient for the grand design. I have several in the town; I will go and arouse their courage, excite and encourage them: they will lead me to the market place at the dawn of day. There will I speak, there will I shew the wounds I have received from *Gesler,* the sockets from whence my eyes were torn by his myrmidons. My age, my hoary locks, my disfigured face, my blood yet upon my clothes, and the tears of this feeble girl, all will aid the eloquence of truth. I hope it, I am certain of it: the people, moved with their wrongs and mine, will be proud to avenge them both. The crowd will immediately increase the number of friends I had collected: my son and your's will come; they will find a numerous body ready to join them. We will attack the fort. I will remain in the thickest of the battle, to animate our brave soldiers; I will make the air echo with the names of our country and Liberty!—They will carry me if I cannot follow them; they will carry me to thy husband; they will bring us both back to thy arms. Yes, I am certain of it: God inspires me with the thought, and announces to me the certitude of victory.—Come, daughter—let us go this instant; come, give me my stick, and lend me thine arm. Night cannot be far off: the night may be of use to us."

"I approve your design," said Emma, "but it is I who must conduct you. Yet, ere we leave home, deign to hear me for a moment: I know, though he has never informed me of it, that my husband has long meditated the grand design of delivering his country. His secret journeys in Schwitz, in Underwald, in Urseren; the quantity of arms which he has concealed; his frequent nocturnal absence; and the pre-occupation of mind which I read on his countenance; all confirmed me of a conspiracy which has been long forming in the three Cantons, and that William is the soul of it. I know not the names of the other chiefs; but I know that those chiefs exist, and that at a certain moment a signal, without doubt, is settled upon and agreed between them. I have not been able to discover what this signal is: but a few days ago a thought darted across my brain like lightening, from a word my husband dropped: this, with several others, has led me to suspect, has led me to believe, that the signal agreed upon by the patriot chiefs could be no other than a burning pile on the summit of this mountain. Time and assistance are wanting to form the pile to-night; but a secret voice whispers to my heart, that, if we could only make such a large fire, all the friends of my husband would haste to his deliverance. I consult thee, *Melctal:* my weak hand will suffice to set fire to the cottage which has served for our asylum. It stands on the most elevated spot. The vast flame will be seen by all the three Cantons.—What is my house, my goods, to me, when my husband is in danger? If I *save* him, thou wilt receive us; if I *lose* him, I then only want a tomb!"

She spoke, and old Henry encouraged her in the design. Emma seized a bundle of dry branches, lighted it in the cottage, threw the flaming brands about her, and burnt without regret, without a sigh or tear, the cradle of her child and the chaste hymeneal bed, which set the whole dwelling in a blaze; when, feeling certain that nothing could extinguish the flames, she gave her arm to the old man, who was supported on the other side by Clara; and thus they descended together the craggy mountain, and took the road to Altorff.

During the deep silence which terror had spread throughout the town, the old man, Emma, and Clara, knocked at the doors of their friends. The fire lighted by the hand of Emma augmented, and, reaching the thatched roof of the cottage, the thatch blazed, and cast an immense glare of light. *Verner* perceived it in Schwitz; the fiery *Melctal*, whom Albert had not yet reached, leaped for joy at the sight; and *Furst*, in the heart of Urseren, doubted not but that William was at the head of the brave inhabitants of Altorff, and called on him for succour.

Those three chiefs took arms at the same moment, and hastened to collect their friends, and call them to liberty. Their friends awoke, seized their arms, assembled in silence, formed themselves into battalions; and from three quarters, almost at the same instant, the three chiefs marched towards Altorff, followed by troops weak in numbers, but strong in courage, and resolved to perish or deliver their country.

With accelerated steps they hasted onwards: retarded by the snows, by torrents, and unbeaten roads, they dreaded lest they should arrive too late at the fort; at this formidable fort, which they must attack at once, and take it with the tyrant. But he, full of inquietude, alarmed by the emotions he witnessed in the people, fearing for his prisoner, trembling for his own life, had already taken new measures, any one of which would render vain all the efforts of the three patriots. *Gesler* at the decline of day, reflecting that his fortress filled with soldiers did not contain provisions sufficient for a long siege, fearing to see himself beseiged in this impregnible fortress, that he should not be able to communicate with the rest of his army scattered in Lucerne, *Gesler* called *Sarnem* to give him new orders; "*Sarnem,*" said he, "I am going to leave Altorff, where thou shalt command in my absence. I leave thee my brave soldiers, who will obey *thy* voice, and *thine* alone. This vile people, whose insolent murmurs are yet heard, shall soon be crushed by the reinforcements which I will send to thee. Let a large boat be instantly prepared, in which fifty men chosen from my guard can go with me this evening. As soon as night veils the earth, let the audacious William be conveyed to the boat:—he yet dares to brave my vengeance. Let him be laden with chains; take care of that, and see that he is conducted by a strong guard. I will myself take him to the strong castle of Kusnach, at the extremity of the lake of Lucerne: there, more safely guarded than here, there he shall remain in a dungeon chained, and punished by every ingenuity of torture that can leave the spark of life existing, and prove to the inhabitants of Altorff what may be expected from my vengeance." *Sarnem*, proud of being chosen to replace the Governor, hastened to obey his orders.

The boat was soon prepared, and fifty chosen archers were conducted by *Sarnem* himself to the dungeon of *Tell.* The hero loaded with heavy chains, which scarcely allowed him the power of moving, is placed under the charge of those fifty archers; and as soon as night had spread her sable mantle on the earth, they conducted him in silence towards the shore, where *Gesler*, alone and in disguise, had already secretly

repaired. *Gesler* made them place the captive in the hold of the vessel, surrounded by his archers; seated himself near the prow: lavished his wine and money upon the soldiers and the rowers; and they departed without observation.

The vessel scudded over the waves: the air was pure, the water smooth, and the stars shone brightly in the firmament. A gentle southern breeze aided the efforts of the rowers, and tempered the rigour of the cold, which night, the time of year and the frost would otherwise render almost insupportable. Every thing favoured *Gesler's* wishes. He soon passed over the first lake of four Cantons; steered his course direct for Brunnen, in order to traverse the strait which leads into the second. *Tell*, in the mean time, borne down with the weight of his chains, stretched on the deck, in the midst of his guards, recognized on the left bank the barren rocks of Grutty; and that cavern, where, on the very evening before, he meditated with his friends, the freedom of his country. The sight of this, the recollection of what had passed there but so lately, nearly staggered his resolution. He felt the big drops stand on his eye, and, quickly wiping them away, he turned aside his head. William looked up to heaven, which at that moment seemed to have forsaken him. On a sudden he beheld on the side of Altorff a red and glimmering light: soon the light increased, and *Tell* perceived a bright flame ascending from above Uri. His heart palpitated with violent emotion: he could not divine what occasioned this signal, the secret of which he had entrusted to no person whatsoever. He doubts—he looks again with eager eyes; and at length is convinced that the blaze seems to come from the mountain on which his dwelling was situated. He gave thanks to heaven, though ignorant whether it was a benefit: he hoped not, he thought not, that this circumstance might save his life; but it might save his country: and this thought rendered him forgetful of his own immediate danger.

Gesler and his soldiers had also perceived the flames; they pointed it out with much surprise; they attributed it to some burning cottage, and heeded not the misfortune which concerned their enemies only. *Gesler* urged on the rowers; impatient to arrive at the destined place, he ordered them to increase their efforts. The vessel steered toward the west, passed the narrow strait, and rowed on the deep waters of the dangerous lake of Underwald:—there on a sudden the south wind ceased to aid the rapid vessel; the north and the west winds now reigned in the troubled atmosphere.

The one, the harbinger of tempests, swelled, heaped, and

gathered the billows into mountains, that instantaneously broke with a tremendous noise over the vessel, which yielding to their force, was driven in each succeeding instant in a different direction: vain were the efforts of the rowers. Now they were driven with impetuosity towards the shore, and immediately back towards the straits. The other, leading on the hoar frost, clouds, and snow, covered the heavens with a funereal veil, and spread the shades of darkness on the surface of the foaming deep; struck the faces and the hands of the rowers with the crystalized points of ice, compelled them to abandon their labours, and hid from their downcast eyes the sight of their danger; filled their vessel with the frozen flakes of snow, and, contending with the north wind, turned the bark round on her keel; now bore her high as the mountain tops on the white foaming billow; now precipitated her into an abyss of waters, menaced on each side by mountainous billows ready to break over her, and bury the whole amid the howling tempest.

The soldiers, pale and overwhelmed with horror, felt their approaching death inevitable, and prayed on their knees to that God whom they had so long forgotten. The cowardly *Gesler*, trembling yet more than his soldiers, heaped promises of rewards and treasures on the rowers if they could save his life: but they, sad, silent, and half dead with fear, replied to his entreaties only by silence. Tears, the dishonourable tears of weakness and of cowardice, bathed for the first time the ferocious eyes of the Governor. He was about to perish; he felt certain of it: his riches and his might, the savage power with which he swayed, and his trusty slaves, all now availed him nothing; they could not avert the stroke of fate. He wept; he regretted life; regretted that his thirst of blood could now no longer be supplied.

Tell, tranquil in the same place, less moved by the cries of the soldiers and the fury of the winds than his inability to discover the cavern of Grutty. *Tell* waited death with a smile, and gloried in the idea of the happiness his country would derive from the tyrant's fate: in silence he enjoyed the fears, the trembling sobs and sighs, the torments, which *Gesler* felt; when one of the rowers suddenly addressed the cruel monster:—"We are lost!" said he: "it is no longer in our power to withstand the violence of the north wind, which will instantly dash our vessel against the rocks which border on the lake. A man, the most renowned in our three Cantons in the art of braving a storm, can alone afford us even a hope of existence:—that man is here, here, loaded with chains. Choose, *Gesler;* choose between the death of all, and his liberty!"—*Gesler* trembled at

the thought; his invincible hatred for *Tell* effected a counterpoise even in his pusillanimous soul between death and the hero's liberty. He hesitated, he gave no answer; but the prayers, the murmurs of the soldiers and the rowers, who asked, who begged, and pressed him to save his own life and theirs, in liberating his prisoner, the fear of being disobeyed if he refused, and the increasing tempest, determined him at length. "Take off his chains," said he. "I pardon all his crimes, I restore him his life and liberty, if he brings us safe to land."

The soldiers and the rowers hastened to set William free. He arose, and, without saying a word, took the command of the helm; turned the bark at his pleasure as a child would do a wand: he opposed the prow to the contending winds, whose forces, thus divided, held them in equilibrio. Profiting by a moment of calm, with the rapidity of thought he turned the vessel round; kept her in the only direction which could save them; seized two oars, and by his individual efforts succeeded, in spite of the winds, waves and tempest, in repassing the straits. The darkness of the night prevented *Gesler* from perceiving that he was returning. William redoubled his efforts in silence; the first rays of refracted light darted through the black clouds of the tempest; but he was in the lake of Uri, and he perceived the dying flame of the signal given on the mountain of Altorff. This light served him for a beacon: he had long known the lake; he avoided the shoals and rocks, and approached by degrees the shore of the Canton of Schwitz. He thought of *Verner;* he calculated that *Verner* ought to be on his march; and that the roads, covered with snow, would oblige him to coast along the lake. In this feeble hope he steered the vessel, feigning ignorance of the place the tempest drove her to, and increased the fears of *Gesler* and his soldiers.

At length, streaks of red appeared towards the east, and the storm lulled by degrees with the rising beams of morning. The opening day discovered to *Tell* the rocks near Altorff, before the tyrant, whose scrutinizing look he feared, had time to recognise them. William directs the vessel's course, and urged the rowers to their utmost exertions. *Gesler*, whose cruelty returned as danger disappeared, observed William with a suspicious eye: he wished, yet dared not, again to fetter him. The soldiers and the rowers, perceiving however where they were, acquainted the Governor, who, advancing hastily towards *Tell*, enraged, and in a voice of passion, demanded why the vessel which he had charge of bent her course towards Altorff. William heeded him not—he answered not, but laid the vessel alongside of a

rock a litt'e distance from the shore;—with one hand eagerly snatched a bow and arrow which an archer held, and, with the velocity of lightning, he shoved the vessel against the rock. There, without a moment's rest, he bounded like the chamois of the mountains, leaped upon another nearer to the bark, quickly climbed the craggy bank, and mounted to its summit; like to the Alpine eagle when he reposes amongst the clouds, and looks with piercing eyes upon the harmless flocks covering the verdant vallies.

The astonished Governor uttered a cry of fury and of rage; he instantly orders every one to disembark, and directs his soldiers to divide themselves, and surround the rock, where he beheld the hero. They obey, and already prepare their bows. *Gesler*, in the midst of them, wishes their united arrows drenched in the blood of William. William also has his plans: he stopped not in one place—he only shews himself to draw the soldiers after him: he permitted the armed body to approach him near enough to do the work of death; he fixed his eye with steadiness on *Gesler*, fitted the arrow to the string, and, pointing it against the tyrant's heart, it cleft the air. The arrow flew, whistling in its rapid course, and pierced the heart of *Gesler*. The tyrant fell, muttering nought but rage, fresh execrations, and vomitting out the purple tide of life; his guilty soul fled, while curses closed his lips.—William had already disappeared; William, more active than the fawn, darted from the summit of the rock: he flew along the fields of ice, traversed the now unfrequented paths, and took the road to Altorff.

He soon discovered in the snow the recent traces of their friends, whom *Verner* that very night had led from Schwitz. William followed them; he ran, he neared them. Tumultuous shouts and the noise of arms are heard at a distance: he flew with all his speed. Arrived at the market place—'tis already filled; occupied by three battalions of heroes. *Verner*, at the head of the warriors of Schwitz, wished to secure the gates before they attack the fort; *Furst*, with the brave youths of Uri, solicits the post of danger; *Melctal*, followed by those of Underwald, cleft the air with his ponderous axe, and with loud shouts demanded the order for attack. Albert, who had never quitted him, armed with a long lance, pronounced the name of *Tell*, demanded him of the soldiers, and pointed at a distance to the prison where they still believed that William was confined. The old Henry, Clara, Emma, mixed amongst the ranks of the scattered troops, and urged them on to the attack.

Sudden and unexpected, William appeared in the centre of

the three patriot battalions. An universal shout of joy was heard throughout the ranks, and echoed from the mountains: a profound silence succeeded to it. All attentively waited for the orders of *Tell*—all seemed attentive to obey him alone. "My friends, my companions," said the hero, "*Gesler* is no more! —this bow, this arm, has punished all his crimes. The corpse of *Gesler*, stretched upon the bank of the lake, is surrounded by those vile myrmidons whom terror had dispersed: we have, then, nothing now to dread. Our country is revenged, but she is not yet free; nor will she ever be so, at least so long as one single stone remains of that frowning citadel which so long has awed us. Let us, then, attack this formidable work, the sole hope, sole refuge, of the ferocious Austrians; let our troops march together, and let the bravest lead the onset!"

He spoke, and seizing the standard of Uri in his left hand, with his right he grasped his battle-axe, and rushed onwards to the hill on which the fort was built. *Furst* and his followers closely pursued his steps; *Verner*, with those of Schwitz, pressed after them: *Melctal* with Underwald had already got half way; and Albert marched by the side of his father. *Sarnem*, prepared, awaited them. A cloud of arrows and of lances flew from the frowning ramparts: they checked not the onset of the assailants, who advanced without exchanging a single arrow to the foot of the walls:—'Twas then the terrible, the fierce *Sarnem*, at a signal which he had agreed on, hurled from the battlements huge rocks and stones, followed by boiling pitch and oil. The brave warriors of the three Cantons are every where repulsed: the burning oil penetrates their garments, and consumes them in horrid agonies; they expire in excrutiating pain; they bit the dust, and uttered their last piercing cries: but their cries were still for *Liberty!* Regardless of their pain and agony, the dying heroes exhorted, encouraged their companions, and bade them march over their bodies to scale the citadel. The Austrians insulted them, and mocked their woes. *Sarnem*, placed between two battlements, smiled contemptuously at their powerless efforts: he animated his soldiers, and his presence and his courage prolong this fierce attack.

William, surrounded by the dying and the dead, preserved his coolness and intrepidity; but at length, alarmed at the great number of his faithful soldiers he had lost, he called to him *Melctal;* and, reproaching himself with having too easily listened to the eager suggestions of bravery alone in making the attack, he exhorted him, nay he commanded him, to withdraw his brave troops from the combat, and to make an attack on the

eastern side, whilst *Verner* and himself should redouble their efforts to conceal this movement from the enemy. *Melctal* obeyed; William and *Verner* again give the word, uttered loud shouts; and *Sarnem* and his troops, occupied with the fresh assault, unite all their efforts to oppose the attack of William. In the mean time, *Melctal* and his associates reached the eastern gate, which was but weakly guarded: he struck it with his powerful axe, laid fire to the frame, and the gate is soon in flames. *Melctal* darted forwards, and penetrated into the fort with the youths of Underwald:—all yield, all fly before him. *Sarnem*, engaged in resisting *Tell*, heard the cries of the flying and the conquerors: he hastens to oppose them; he turns, and beholds *Melctal.—Melctal*, rapid as the thunderbolt, raised his ponderous axe, and cleft his hated rival; then, advancing to the edge of the battlements, he extended his hands, and cried out *Victory!!!*

William soon joined him, and the standard of Uri floated over the walls of this once formidable castle. *Melctal* and *Verner*, standing on a heap of slain, gave thanks to the Almighty, and answered to the acclamations of the people whom they had delivered.

The fort was soon cleared of the dead bodies which had filled it. The troops of the three Cantons surrounded their gallant chiefs, and carried them in triumph amongst the inhabitants of Altorff, who, running from all quarters, were assembled in the market place to behold their deliverers, and to confide to their wisdom, their courage, and their talents, the defence of Liberty; but William entreated their silence, and, having obtained it, thus addressed them:—

"My countrymen! at length you are restored to freedom; but this freedom, so dear to us, is perhaps more difficult to preserve than to acquire: for the one, bravery will alone suffice; for the other, we must possess virtues, austere, steady, and immoveable. Guard against the delirium of victory; guard against a blind adoration of those who obtained it for you. You already speak of chusing us your chiefs; while the only recompence which I require, the only one my heart now wishes for, is to become a soldier; and to enjoy that equality, that charm, so pure, so dear, to true republicans. In a republic, my friends, we all are useful. Perish the man who thinks otherwise! and unhappy be that people who will not punish even the thought!

"Assemble together, my friends, to weigh in the meditation of your wisdom both your interests and your designs; let every

man, according to the laws, think, examine, and advise, what he deems best for his country's good; let this privilege be given to every citizen of the age of twenty years. In proportion as we love our country, we have a right to interest ourselves about her welfare, and to contribute to it, both by our personal efforts and our understandings. Elect a Landamman; let that ancient title, respected by our forefathers, become more so amongst us; let a council direct him; and let him, in turn, direct the council. Enact laws:—without laws, what would you be? Liberty is but another name for submission to wise and prudent laws:—without them, it would be licentiousness. Preserve your morals; let them become, if possible, more pure. Without true virtue, there is no liberty. The republican, by this name, is placed, in the middle state betwixt men and angels: let him, then, be better; let him, then, be greater than his fellow men by whom he is surrounded.

"For myself, fellow citizens! I wish not, I ask not, nor will accept, only the endearing name of Fellow Patriot, and the right of combating in your ranks. You must expect new traits of your courage; you must expect that the Emperor will endeavour to regain the sceptre you have now wrested from him. Prepare yourselves, then, to resist his efforts; prepare for battles, and trust your cause to *God!* Call, however, to the assistance of Liberty the other Cantons of Switzerland: either I am much deceived, or their hearts already beat in unison with ours Then, by dint of arms, of virtue, and of courage, you will found a republic which will one day become the terror and the admiration of all Europe; then will mighty kings be proud of the name of Ally, and will believe themselves invincible while they have the Swiss for their defenders; then, reaping the full honours both of valour and of wisdom, you will prefer the glory of being Men and Free!"

He spoke, and the people, with loud continued plaudits, signified their approbation: they immediately proceeded to the election of their magistrates. *Tell, Verner Melctal,* now returned to their original rank of simple citizens; received the humble reward, the meed of valour and of virtue, a crown of oak:— they returned to their former ranks. And this people for two hundred years resisted all the power of the Empire, and and founded its freedom on its victories.

THE END.

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